Meditations on the Tarot

Letters XIII - XVII

A Journey into Christian Hermeticism

Letter XIII : Meditation on the thirteen Major Arcanum of the Tarot - "D e a t h" - "L a M o r t" --

> And the woman said to the Serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"
> But the Serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis iii, 2-5)
>
> O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!
> (Ezekiel xxvii, 4)

Have you, dear Unknown Friend, ever been struck by the contrary statements concerning death made by God and the Serpent in the narrative in Genesis on the Fall? Because God says there, "You shall not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for on the day when you eat from it you will die," and the Serpent says, "You will not die". Here God is categorical; the Serpent is just as much so.

Did the Serpent quite simply lie? Or is it a matter of a fundamental error on the part of the Serpent? Or again, did he state a truth from the range of <u>truths proper to the domain of the Serpent</u> which are untruths in the domain of truths for God? In other words, are there <u>two</u> immortalities and <u>two</u> different deaths — one from the point of view of God, the other from the point of view of the Serpent? Thus, is it simply that the Serpent understands by "death" what God understands by "life" and that he understands by "life" what God understands by "death"?

Now, I invite you, dear Unknown Friend, to set to work with a view to finding an answer to this question, whilst bringing to your attention fruits of the work that I have made towards the same end. For the answer to this question is the Arcanum of the thirteenth Card of the Tarot — "Death", which represents a skeleton who reaps only what pushes up from the black soil and rises above it — hands, heads ... —

Our empirical experience of death is the <u>disappearance</u> from the physical plane of living beings. Such is the Fact of our experience from without, that we have by means of our five senses. But the <u>disappearance</u> as such is not confined to the domain of outward experience of the senses. It is experienced also in the domain of inner experience, in that of consciousness. There the images and representations disappear just as living beings do so for the experience of the senses. This is what we call "forgetting". And this forgetting extends each night to the totality of our memory, will and understanding — of a kind such that we forget <u>ourselves</u> entirely. This is what we call "<u>sleep</u>".

For our whole experience (outer <u>and</u> inner) forgetting, sleep and death are three manifestations of the same thing — namely the "thing" which effects disappearance. It is

said that sleep is the younger brother of death. It is necessary to add: forgetting is the brother of sleep.

Forgetting, sleep and death are three manifestations — differing in degree — of a sole principle or force which effects the disappearance of intellectual, psychic and physical phenomena. Forgetting is to sleep as sleep is to death. Or again: forgetting is to memory as sleep is to consciousness, and sleep is to consciousness as death is to life.

One forgets, one goes to sleep, and one dies. One remembers, one awakes, and one is born. Remembering is to forgetting as awakening is to falling asleep, and awakening is to sleeping as birth is to death. One forgets oneself when one goes to sleep, and one remembers oneself when one awakes. It is also the mechanism of forgetting which is at work when one dies, and it is the mechanism of remembering which works at birth. When Nature forgets us, then we die; when we forget ourselves, then we fall asleep; and when we lose active interest in something, then we forget it.

Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that the respective domains of forgetting, sleep and death are more vast and more profound than intellectual forgetting, organic sleep and clinical death. Apart from intellectual forgetting there is also forgetting in the domain of the soul (psychic forgetting) and a forgetting in the domain of the will, just as there is memory in the domain of the soul and memory in the domain of the will — beyond intellectual memory. Thus, for example, one can retain a clear and precise intellectual memory of a friend from the past but at the same time have completely forgotten him psychically. One recalls, but without the living friendship of former times. Similarly, one can remember a person intellectually and psychically, i.e. with vivid feeling, but at the same time have forgotten him in the domain of the will. One remembers him with tenderness perhaps, but one <u>does nothing</u> for him.

Beyond organic sleep, i.e. when one is in bed and oblivious of everything including oneself, there is psychic sleep and a sleep of the will. During the sixteen or eighteen hours that we are in the waking state there are layers of our psychic being which are asleep. During the waking state one is "asleep" to many things — facts, people, ideas, God ...

And if the Buddha is considered — and venerated — as "fully awake" to the facts of human life such as sickness, old age and death, it is because those who are not Buddhas know that they are asleep with regard to these facts — not intellectually, but psychically and in their will. They "know" it and they <u>do not know</u> it at the same time. For one <u>knows</u> truly when one <u>understands</u> what one knows, when one <u>feels</u> what one has understood, and when one has <u>put into practice</u> what one has understood and felt.

Similarly, beyond clinical death there is a psychic death and a moral death. During our seventy or eighty years of life we bear within us layers of death in our psychic being. There are things which are missing from our psychic and moral being. The <u>absence</u> of faith, hope and love cannot be remedied either by arguments or by exhortations or even by a living example. An act of divine magic — or Grace — is necessary to accomplish the <u>infusion</u> of life into that which is dead. And if Christ is worshipped as the Risen One, it is because those who bear death within them know that it is only divine Magic which can raise what is dead within them and that the risen Christ is the guarantor of this.

Forgetting, sleep and death — like remembering, waking and birth — have imaginary and symbolic expressions proper to them. Thus <u>black</u> is the image of forgetting, <u>tufts of grass</u> are

the image of sleep, and a skeleton with a scythe is the image of death.

Black is the symbol both of involuntary and natural forgetting and of that voluntary and supernatural forgetting of which St. John of the CROSS speaks — this threefold night of the senses, the understanding and the will, in which the union of the soul with God is accomplished. Tufts of grass or leaves are the symbols of sleep, because deep sleep is the state where we live a vegetative life. Organic life — breathing, circulation, digestion and growth — continue during sleep without "animality" and "humanity" being present. We are plants when we are deep in sleep.

And the skeleton is the symbol of death because it reduces the phenomenon of the conscious, mobile, living and material man to that which is mineral in him — the skeleton.

Natural forgetting reduces man to animality; natural sleep reduces him to vegetality; and natural death reduces him to minerality. The whole problem of death, comprising three degrees — forgetting, sleeping and death proper, or the Arcanum of death must therefore be presented to us as the image of a black sphere, beneath which there are tufts of grass and above which there is a skeleton.

And it is precisely the thirteenth Card of the Tarot which presents us this image. The context of the Card is that of the threefold manifestation of the principle of subtraction by way of forgetting, sleep and death. We have here the black soil, the blue and yellow tufts of grass, and also the skeleton mowing.

The Card contains still a fourth element, represented on the Card by the human heads and hands, and one foot, to which we shall return later.

The thirteenth Arcanum of the Tarot is therefore that of the principle of subtraction or death, and is the opposite of the principle of addition or life. It is necessary to subtract the Self from the astral body, the etheric body and the physical body in order to understand the mechanism of forgetting; it is necessary to subtract the Self and the astral body from the etheric body and the physical body in order to obtain the state of sleep; and it is necessary to subtract the Self, the astral body and the etheric body from the physical body in order to obtain the corpse, i.e. the fact of death. These three degrees of subtraction in their totality constitute the process of excarnation, just as the corresponding three degrees of addition constitute the totality of the process of incarnation. For incarnation is the addition of an astral body to the Self, the addition of an etheric body to the astral body and the Self, and lastly the addition of a physical body to the etheric body, the astral body and the Self.

Now, the scythe which is held by the skeleton of the Card represents the work of subtraction. It is this which symbolizes the force of excarnation, i.e. that which severs the ties between the Self and the astral body (forgetting), the ties between the astral body and the etheric body (sleep), and the ties between the etheric body and the physical body (death).

What are the ties between the soul and the body — rather, the soul and the bodies — that the scythe of the threefold principle of subtraction severs? What is it that unites the Self to the astral body, the astral body to the vital or etheric body, and the vital body to the physical body? In other words, how and why do we remember the past, how and why do we wake in the morning, and how and why do we live several decades?

In the first place, let us disregard the enormous literature where these questions are dealt

with and endeavor to undertake a meditative work, i.e. to think directly about the subject which occupies us, without the intermediary of what may be borrowed from sources other than our immediate experience and understanding. To meditate is to think with a view to attaining certainty in the inner forum of consciousness, renouncing all pretension of arriving at things of general validity (i.e. things which may be a contribution to science). In meditation — and these Letters are only meditations — it is a matter above all of the question, posed in all honesty to our own conscience and answered in all honesty by our own conscience: "What do I myself know?", and not the question: "What is generally known?"

Let us disregard for the moment, dear Unknown Friend, what is generally known and said on the subject of the ties between the soul and the body, and let us endeavor to take account — just for ourselves — of what we know and are able to know about it.

Firstly, let us consider the domain of forgetting and remembering — the memory. Memory is the magic, in the subjective domain, which effects the evocation of things from the past. It renders past things present. Just as a sorcerer or necromancer evokes the spirits of the dead by making them appear, so does memory evoke things of the past and make them appear to our inner mental vision. The present remembrance is the result of a magical operation in the subjective domain, where one has succeeded in evoking from the black void of forgetfulness a living image from the past. A living image from the past... Imprint? Symbol? Copy? Phantom?

It is all of these at once. It is an imprint in so far as it reproduces an impression received in the past; it is a symbol in so far as it makes use of my imagination to represent a reality which goes beyond its imaginary representation; it is a copy in so far as it only aims at reproducing the original from the past; it is a phantom in so far as it is an apparition from the black abyss of forgetfulness and in so far as it recalls to life the past in making it present to my inner vision.

What is the force at work in the subjective magical operation of remembering?

There are four types of memory that I have experienced: mechanical or automatic memory, logical memory, moral memory and vertical or revelatory memory.

Mechanical or automatic memory hardly makes any demand on the act of recall. The remembrance simply happens. It takes place in an automatic way according to the laws of association — i.e. resemblances, affinities and alliances between things — which effect recall without my taking any other part than that of an observer. This sort of memory supplies me, on the occasion of each impression that I receive, with a host of images of the past from which I can choose. Thus when I see a pipe, I can choose between images of the past which present themselves to my mind: "An old sea-dog whom I saw at B. in 19... "; "A book on Red Indians where it was a matter of the peace-pipe ritual"; "My friend S. who used to put everyone to flight when he lit his pipe of tobacco cultivated and prepared by himself at the time of the last war when there was no tobacco for sale", etc. etc.

In so far as logical memory is concerned, I am more active than in the case of automatic memory. Here I have to think in order to remember things. Thus, for example, if I want to remember the Hindu Trinity, amongst whom I have forgotten one of the three terms, I ask myself: If there is a Creator and a Destroyer, Brahma and Shiva, which third principle ought to be found between the Creator and the Destroyer? I concentrate on the empty place between the two and I make an effort to fill it logically. "Ah, it is the Conserver principle — this is Vishnu — of course!!" I say to myself.

In logical memory there is less automatism and more conscious effort.

With respect to moral memory, there is hardly any automatism. Here the remembrance is no longer something which happens but rather it is an authentic magical act, although subjective. It is love which is at work in moral memory when it recalls things from the past. Here it is admiration, respect, friendship, gratitude, affection and a thousand other things which have deeply moved you, which render things from the past unforgettable, i.e. evocable at each instant. The more one has loved, the more one remembers through moral memory.

As a general rule young people possess a very strong mechanical memory. It becomes feebler with age and it is logical or intellectual memory which comes to its assistance. This demands an effort to think, an intellectual effort. People who have failed to develop a taste for thinking and intellectual effort will have difficulties with their memory in mature age. Mechanical memory will fail them more and more, and logical memory, called to supplement it, will also be lacking.

With respect to moral memory, it is above all in old age that it replaces more and more not only mechanical memory but also logical and intellectual memory. It is the heart then which supplies the energy which nourishes and maintains memory and which supplements the growing lapse of mechanical memory and intellectual memory. Senile lapse of memory is due to the fact that the person who suffers from it failed to replace in time the functions of intellectual memory — without mentioning mechanical memory — by those of moral memory. People who are able to and who know how to give everything a moral worth and to see a moral sense in everything will not forget anything; they will have a normal, if not excellent, memory to a very advanced age.

Moral memory — which can comprehend everything without exception — is all the more effective the less one is morally indifferent. Indifference, a lack of moral interest, is the fundamental cause of the lapse of memory which often takes place in old age. The less one is indifferent, the more one remembers of the past and the more one is capable of learning new things.

Beyond the three types of memory — mechanical, logical and moral — of which it is a matter here, there is still the kind of memory that we have designated as "vertical or revelatory memory". It is not a memory of the past in the sense of the horizontal line: today, yesterday, the day before, etc., but rather in the sense of the vertical line: here, higher, still higher, etc. It is a "memory" which does not link the present to the past on the plane of physical, psychic and intellectual life, but which links the plane of ordinary consciousness to planes or states of consciousness higher than that of ordinary consciousness. It is the faculty of the "lower self" to reproduce the experience and knowledge of the "higher Self" or, if you like, the faculty of the "higher Self" to imprint its experience and knowledge upon the consciousness of the "lower self". It is the link between the "higher eye" and the "lower eye", which renders us authentically religious and wise, and immune to the assaults of skepticism, materialism and determinism. It is this also which is the source of certainty not only of God and the spiritual world with its hierarchical entities but also of the immortality of our being and reincarnation, wherever it is a matter of reincarnation. "Dawn is the friend of the muses" and similar popular proverbs — such as "Die Morgenstunde hat Gold im Munde" ("the morning hour has gold in its mouth") (German), or "Utro vechera mudreye" ("morning is wiser than evening") (Russian), or even "De morgenstond heeft goud in den mond" (the Dutch version of "Die Morgenstunde hat Gold im Munde") — relate to the benefits of vertical memory from which one benefits in the morning, after the return of consciousness from the plane of "natural ecstasy" or sleep.

"Vertical memory" is the more effective to the extent that the three sacred vows — obedience, poverty and chastity — render the lower man capable of listening to, perceiving and receiving things from above without distortion. "Vertical memory" is fundamentally only "moral memory" carried in its development to a still higher degree. This is why it is only moral purification, which the practice of the three sacred vows entails, that counts in the case of "vertical memory". Intellectual interests, as such, do not count here.

This is an outlined inventory of the domain of memory. Let us now return to the question: What is the force at work in the subjective magical operation of recall?

It is necessary, firstly, to take account of the fact that in the scale that we have established: "mechanical memory" — "intellectual memory" - "moral memory" - "vertical memory" it is a matter of degrees of <u>remoteness and proximity</u>, concerning an immediate and lucid understanding of the evidence as to "how" and "why" memory functions through consciousness. In fact, the more something is mechanical, the more it is removed from immediate understanding through consciousness, and the more it is removed from the latter, the more it is mysterious and incomprehensible. A purely mechanical explanation is, truth to tell, not at all an explanation, because it removes the object to be explained from the domain where understanding takes place — by shifting it from the domain of comprehensibility, i.e, from "thinkability" and "feelability" — into the domain of the unconscious and therefore of incomprehensibility. He who wants to explain the phenomenon of smiling, for example, by the contraction of muscles in the region of the mouth and cheeks, and this latter through electrical impulses transmitted through the nerves from the center called the "brain", will in no way give an explanation of the phenomenon of "smiling", even if he correctly describes the entire mechanical process in the muscles and nerves, for the simple reason that he disregards the <u>joy</u> of which the smiling is a manifestation and which set in motion both the muscles of the mouth and the electrical impulses of the nerves. For it is not nerves and muscles which are manifested in smiling, but rather joy.

And just as the description of the mechanical process of the muscles and nerves is in no way a reply to the question: What is smiling?, so is every mechanical explanation of whatever it may be in no way an explanation of the whole, but rather it reduces questions to silence by shifting the subject of the questions from the domain of comprehensibility to that of incomprehensibility — from the light of consciousness to the darkness of the unconscious. For what we call "mechanical" is in reality only the unconscious (or rather "that which is deprived of consciousness") and is therefore inaccessible to consciousness, and therefore incomprehensible, unthinkable and unfeelable.

Mechanicalism is therefore not at all the realm of answers, but rather the graveyard for real questions.

This is why in the scale of memory under discussion we must not — and in fact cannot — seek to understand the working of recall in the domain where it is unknowable and incomprehensible, i.e. in that of "mechanical memory". On the contrary, we must seek it at the other end of the scale — where it is least embedded in the darkness of "mechanicalism" and where it most reveals its essence in the light of consciousness, i.e. in the domain of "moral memory" and "vertical memory". For it is the stage of complete development which illumines and explains the previous stages, and not vice versa. The minimum is only the reduced maximum and it is through the

maximum that one understands the minimum, and not vice versa. It is consciousness which renders the mechanical and unconscious comprehensible, the latter being only consciousness reduced to a minimum, and not vice versa. It is man who is the key to the biological evolution of Nature and not the primitive organic cell.

We must therefore seek for the key to the operation of recall in memory at the highest degree of memory's development — "moral memory" and "vertical memory". Therefore, what is the force at work in the subjective magical operation of remembering, such as it is revealed in "vertical memory" and in "moral memory"?

The following reveals it to its highest conceivable degree — other degrees being only its analogous, weakened manifestions:

> "Now Jesus <u>loved</u> Martha and her sister and Lazarus... when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days... Jesus wept... Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said: <u>Take away the stone</u> ... So they took away the stone... Jesus <u>cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come out!</u> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth." (John, xi, 5-44)

Here is the <u>force of recall</u> in its most complete, most strong and most elevated manifestation. It is <u>love</u>, for "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus".

The operation of <u>recall</u> to life — or resurrection — comprises <u>three</u> stages: that of <u>coming</u>, that of <u>taking away the stone</u> and that of <u>recall</u>, i.e. "crying with a loud voice".

Firstly, coming: "To come and to arrive" is the activity which seeks and finds the <u>last door</u> which separates the recaller from the recalled. The "about two miles" between Bethany and Jerusalem that the Master went in order to arrive at the tomb of Lazarus represent the first effort in the whole operation of recall: that which aims at arriving at the point of maximum approach to the subject of recall.

Then, the taking away of the stone: this is the effort which vanquishes doubt, depression, fatigue and, lastly, despair, which bar the way to the recalled, like the stone placed before the tomb. By analogy, one is powerless to recall in the domain of vertical memory and moral memory things that one believes are lost for ever, or regarding which one believes that it is impossible to call them to the light of consciousness. This doubt and lack of faith paralyzes the effort to recall and is like the stone placed before the tomb. This stone is often — if not always — the cause for many people of the absence of all living feeling and conviction, without speaking of precise and concrete remembrances, of former lives, i.e. of reincarnation. The remembrances have knocked at the door in vain, the stone placed before it not allowing them to come out from their depths and enter into the light of consciousness.

Lastly, recall: "To cry with a loud voice" is the culminating — and the supreme — effort of the operation of recall through the force of love, whether to life, as was the case with Lazarus, or whether to memory, as is the case of recall with vertical and moral memory.

A voice is louder, i.e. more audible, in the physical world, the more intense the vibrations are that it produces in the air.

It is otherwise in the spiritual world. There a voice is more audible, i.e. "louder", the more it expresses underlying <u>effort</u> and <u>suffering</u>. <u>Work</u> and <u>suffering</u> are the things which render our voices audible to the spiritual world and in the spiritual world. These are the factors which create "vibrations" sufficiently "loud" in the spiritual world in order to render our voices audible. This is why the rosary-prayer repeats the Ave Maria one hundred and fifty times and the Pater Noster fifteen times. For if it is suffering which renders audible the ejaculative prayer

of a single word — "Jesus!", for example — it is effort which renders the rosary-prayer audible. I would lack respect for the truth if I did not say that the effort of the rosary-prayer founded on suffering makes it a powerful means, sometimes almost all-powerful, in sacred Magic.

Now, the "cry with a loud voice", which is the decisive act in the whole operation of recall, must be strong both in effort and in suffering: "Jesus wept... Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb... Jesus cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come out!" — It is love which wept and which strove to accomplish the miracle of recall from death to life — which is also the case in recall from forgetfulness to memory.

Is recall therefore a miracle?

... yes, a miracle. But allow me, dear Unknown Friend, to say something concerning the miracle that I believe to be of the highest significance, of which every Christian Hermeticist and every Cabbalist should take account: it is that there is no freedom outside of the miraculous and that man is man only in so far as he lives from the miracle, through the miracle and for the miracle.

All that is not mechanical — physical, psychic and intellectual — is miraculous, and all that is not miraculous is only mechanical — physical, psychic and intellectual. Freedom is a miracle and man is only free in so far as he is not a machine — physical, psychic and intellectual. We have no other choice than between the machine and slavery, on the one hand, and the miracle and Freedom, on the other hand.

The human machine functions according to the determined programme "maximum pleasure at minimum cost" in a way so as to lend itself to precise prediction in its reactions to given circumstances. In the intellectual domain it rejects every notion and every idea which does not harmonize with the intellectual system established in it; in the psychic domain it rejects all that does not harmonize with the complex of "happiness" established in it; and in the physical domain it automatically follows the orders transmitted by the complex "instinct" established in it.

It is only the functioning of the human machine when a rich man declares himself anti-communist and a poor man declares himself pro-communist. But it is a miracle — that is to say an act of freedom — when a rich man abandons his possessions and embraces poverty, as did St. Anthony the Great and also many other saints, and also Carmelites, Franciscans, Dominicans, etc., who took the vow of poverty. The miracle of St. Francis is not only the healing of a leper but also the love of St. Francis for "Lady Poverty". Did not the miracles of Jesus-Christ, after the resurrection of Lazarus, culminate in the cross on Calvary where, in the full agony of torture, he said:- "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" - (Luke xxiii, 34)?

All that one does is miraculous; all intellectual, psychic and physical functioning according to "nature", i.e. according to human automatism, is mechanical. The Sermon on the Mount is the teaching of doing and of the triumph over functioning. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you... and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven" (Luke vi, 27-28; Matthew v, 44-45) - is this not a teaching which aims at the liberation of the machine, i.e. of all functioning, and which is a school for the miraculous?

Because to bless those who curse you is a miracle from the point of view of the "normal and natural" functioning of the reactions of the human machine. This does not just happen, it is done (it is created); and I repeat, one only does miracles, and all that is done is a miracle, and nothing is done without it being a miracle. All that which is not a miracle is not really done — it happens, as part of automatic functioning. It is only through the miracle that true being expresses itself, that its creative word reveals itself.

It is wrong, therefore, to interpret the phrases at the beginning of the Gospel according

to John as the teaching of a kind of cosmic rationalism, analogous to the Stoic doctrine of "λογος". – No, the phrases at the beginning of the Gospel according to John openly declare the cosmic role of the miracle, and that the world is due to a miracle, i.e. that it was made by the creative Word, and not that it was due to any functioning, to any automatic — even highly intellectual — process.

"All things were made through the Word, and nothing that was made was made without him"

–says the Evangelist, and what we have said above concerning the miracle and the machine — i.e. concerning "doing" and "functioning" — is only the microcosmic analogy to the statement of macrocosmic significance from the Gospel according to John.

Now, "all things made through the Word" includes also recall in vertical and moral memory. The act of recall belongs to the sphere of "doing" and therefore to that of the miraculous, and not to the sphere of functioning. Recall in "logical memory" is a mixture of doing and functioning. Lastly, recall in mechanical memory is only functioning, i.e. the act of moral recall reduced to a minimum.

IF recall is an act analogous to the resurrection of Lazarus, then what is forgetting?

Forgetting outlines a scale analogous to that of recall. It can take place automatically, semi-automatically, and in a free and conscious way, according to the category of memory in which it is placed. In mechanical memory one forgets automatically; things are just forgotten. In logical memory things become distant and are effaced little by little if one does not recall them from time to time to the field of conscious attention. In moral memory and in "vertical memory" nothing is forgotten; forgetting here is a moral act of will.

Let us follow the same procedure as is the case in recall, i.e. let us begin at the end of the scale where forgetting is an act of consciousness and where it is understandable — where it takes place in the light of consciousness.

Now, there is no one who does not know through experience that all conscious effort entails concentration or contemplation, and that concentration and contemplation signify conscious and willed forgetting of many things which do not relate to the subject of concentration or contemplation. One knows that when one prays the "Pater Noster" one forgets not only one's daily affairs but also all other prayers for the time that one prays the "Pater Noster".

It is the same with spiritual and divine values, and those of the phenomenal world. The three stages on the way towards the soul's union with God — those of purification, illumination and union — are simply the history of a single growing effort of concentration of the entire soul upon God. Saint John of the Cross says of the effect of the experience of actual union of the soul's powers with God:–

> "... all the powers of the soul together, because of the union in the inner cellar, drink of the Beloved... This draught of God's most deep wisdom makes the soul forget all the things of this world, and consider all its previous knowledge, and the knowledge of the whole world besides, as pure ignorance in comparison with this knowledge." (St. John of the Cross, "A Spiritual Canticle" xxvi, 7, 10; trsl. D. Lewis, London, 1909, pp. 204-205)

And again:–

> "... the more the memory is united to God the more it loses all distinct knowledge, and at last all such fades utterly away, when the state of perfection is reached. In the beginning, when this is going on, great forgetfulness ensues, for these forms and knowledge fall into oblivion... the memory is lost in God. But he who has attained to the habit of union does not forget, in this way, that which relates to moral and natural reason; he performs in much greater perfection all necessary and befitting actions, though by the ministry of forms and knowledge, in the memory, supplied in a special manner by God." (St. John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" III, i, 5; trsl. D. Lewis, London, 1906, pp. 244-245)

I may add that the masters of Raja-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga and Jnana-Yoga teach the

practice of complete forgetting of the phenomenal world with a view to attaining perfect contemplation. The teaching of forgetting is found also in the mystical Cabbala and in Mohammedan mysticism, e.g. that of Sufism.

Now, forgetting is the means of transition from one state of consciousness to another. Even in the case of sleep, which can be considered as a "natural ecstasy", one has to forget the world of the day in order to be able to pass into the world of the night. In order to fall asleep one has to be able to forget. Insomnia is due to the inability to forget.

And awakening? Awakening is simultaneously an act of recall of the world of the day and an act of forgetting the nocturnal world. Awakening would be incomplete — which it, moreover, often is — if one did not forget the experiences of the nocturnal world. The night would then be mingled with the day and human consciousness would be hindered in its capacity with respect to the tasks and duties of the day — its concentration being hampered by the haunting memory of nocturnal remembrances.

And birth and death?

If the soul's mystical union with God is forgetting of the phenomenal world and recall of God, death is simultaneously the call from above and forgetting below. The three stages of the way leading to the soul's union with God — purification, illumination and union — are repeated after death: purgatory is purification (catharsis), which precedes illumination or heaven, and heaven is the state of the soul when it arrives at union with God, analogous to that experienced by mystics during their terrestrial life. This union, there as here, becomes habitual — which is a sovereign good for the soul — and then it remembers anew the earth and its trials. Memory then manifests a "greater perfection" (says St. John of the Cross concerning the resuscitated functions of memory in the case of the soul which has the habit of union) in all its action — let us add, actions directed towards the earth.

This is the motivation for the blessed work of saints. Saints are souls who possess the "habit of union" and are therefore in possession of the higher spiritualized memory spoken of by Saint John of the Cross. They do not seek union with God; they are united with God. This is why they act — their faces being turned towards the earth and not towards God — in the name of God on the earth. They act, being united with God, in the guise of organs of his will.

It is the same with the celestial hierarchies — with angels, for example. Guardian angels could never be guardians of human beings if their looks were turned towards God, if they were absorbed in contemplation of God. It is thanks to their "habitual union" with God, i.e. thanks to the accomplished fact of the union of their will with divine will, that they are able to fulfill their task as guardians of men. They know the divine will in a blind way — through the dim intuition of their own will, i.e. through perfect faith — whilst what they see is the earth and human life on earth. Their faces, as are those of the saints, are turned towards the earth.

This is the motivation for devotion to the guardian angels.

With respect to birth, it can, also, be either "holy" or "natural", i.e. it can either be an act of obedience to divine will or rather it can be effected as a consequence of a "call from the earth". A soul can be sent to the earth or it can be attracted by the earth. In the first case it is an act analogous to the recall of vertical and moral memory, i.e. analogous to the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. In the latter case it is an event that is half-voluntary and half-involuntary, where the soul falls — often without realizing it — into the sphere of terrestrial attraction, which bears it to birth, and thereby it is made little by little to forget its experiences above. Birth is then a forgetting of heaven and simultaneously a recall to the earth.

This is not so with "holy birth". Here it is the remembrance of the divine which is the force which accomplishes incarnation. It is not thanks to forgetting of the divine that the soul is then incarnated, but rather thanks to its remembering. It is in the state of "habitual union"

with God that the soul is incarnated. Then its will does not lose memory of the divine. This memory acts in it, imprinted as it is in the soul's will, during the whole terrestrial life which follows a "holy birth". One could then speak of a "mission", or an "election". And this is the right title for it, because such a mission is — the only one which really exists. For the true mission is not what the human being proposes to do on the earth according to his tastes, his interests and even his ideals, but rather what God wants him to do. Arbitrary "missions", although due to the best intentions in the world, have only contributed confusion to human history. It is to these inopportune "missions" that we owe many crises upsetting the life of mankind's living traditions — interrupting, in the guise of passing comets, the peaceful and constructive flow of true progress.

A true mission on the earth serves the cause of the ennoblement and spiritualization of that which is, i.e. of what lives as tradition. It brings an impulse effecting the rejuvenation and intensification of tradition. Arbitrary missions, on the contrary, aim at revolutionizing the course of mankind's history and substituting specific innovations for what lives as tradition. In pushing this to the extreme one could say: a true mission brings to greater perfection everything human on the earth — the family, civilization, culture, religion, etc., whilst arbitrary missions can result in summoning the intervention of Martians or Venusians so that they rule affairs on the Earth!

Now, birth, awakening and recall, on the one hand, and death, falling asleep and forgetting, on the other hand, constitute, so to say, the two pillar-forces of reality. They manifest in remembering and forgetting, in the rhythm of sleeping and waking and in that of birth and death — as well as in the respiration of organisms, in the circulation of blood, and in alimentation. They are the y-e-s and n-o in every domain — mental, psychic and physical.

The Gospel maxim, "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from Evil" (Matthew v, 37) reveals its significance in this context. The "yes" and the "no" — this is the essential of reality, i.e. the truth, pure and simple, whilst the "surplus" comes from Evil, i.e. it belongs to the sphere of the Serpent. For the Serpent of Genesis has his own word — the word which is the "surplus" over "yes" and "no". He is in possession of a third term.

And here we return to the question that we posed at the beginning of this Letter, namely: Has the Serpent, having said, "You will not die", simply told a lie, or has he stated a truth from the range of truths proper to the domain of the Serpent? In other words: What is the "surplus" that the Serpent adds to the "yes" and "no" understood as life and death?

If you accept, dear Unknown Friend, what we have said in the preceding Letters on the difference in principle that there is between life and electricity, between the principle of the Virgin and that of the Serpent, you will certainly be able to penetrate more deeply the secret of the "surplus" offered and promised by the Serpent to humanity concerning the "yes" and "no" understood as life and death.

Here is this secret: the Serpent offers and promises such a crystallization, according to the principle of enfoldment, that the human being will resist death and become, so to say, "death-proof", immune to death. This crystallization is effected through friction, i.e. by the electrical energy which is produced by the struggle between "yes" and "no" in man.

Without doubt you know, dear Unknown Friend, that there are schools — occult or other — which teach and practice crystallization and that there are other schools which teach and practice radiation, i.e. the complete de-crystallization of the human being and his transformation into a "sun", into a center of radiation. "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew xiii, 43) — this is the practical aim of "schools of radiation", to which that of Christian Hermeticism belongs.

The "schools of crystallization" are quite numerous and widespread. There are those which are entirely secret, with very serious intentions; there are also those which are known in the guise of almost popular movements for "health, rejuvenation and longevity". I shall not

speak here of the practices of the entirely secret schools, the secret not being mine but that of others. Also I shall not speak about the almost popular movement, because it will certainly be easy to understand their aim and methods after having understood the aim and method of an occult school that I have chosen as an illustrative example. I have chosen this particular occult school as an example, because it is something between the secret schools and the almost popular movements and because it has itself taken the decision to show itself in broad daylight, thus authorizing me to speak of it and to cite its documents, accessible to everyone.

I have in mind the school of G.J. GURDJIEFF, and I am going to cite the work "In Search of the Miraculous" by P.D. OUSPENSKY.

Now, the following is the teaching of Gurdjieff, such as it has been understood and formulated by Ouspensky, concerning the practical task of survival:-

"On one occasion, at one of these meetings, someone asked about the possibility of reincarnation, and whether it was possible to believe in cases of communication with the dead.
—"Many things are possible," said G. (Gurdjieff)." But it is necessary to understand that man's being, both in life and after death, if it does exist after death, may be very different in quality. The 'man-machine' with whom everything depends upon external influences, with whom everything happens, who is now one, the next moment another, and the next moment a third, has no future of any kind; he is buried and that is all. Dust returns to dust. This applies to him. In order to be able to speak of any kind of future life there must be a kind of crystallization, a certain fusion of man's inner qualities, a certain independence of external influences. If there is anything in a man able to resist external influences, then this very thing itself may also be able to resist the death of the physical body....

But even if something survives, its future can be very varied. In certain cases of fuller crystallization, what people call 'reincarnation' may be possible after death, and, in other cases, what people call 'existence on the other side'. In both cases it is the continuation of life in the 'astral body', or with the help of the 'astral body'. You know what the expression 'astral body' means. But the systems with which you are acquainted and which use this expression state that all men have an 'astral body'. This is quite wrong. What may be called the 'astral body' is obtained by means of fusion, that is, by means of terribly hard inner work and struggle. Man is not born with it. And only very few men acquire an 'astral body'. If it is formed it may continue to live after the death of the physical body, and it may be born again in another physical body....

Fusion, inner unity, is obtained by means of 'friction', by the struggle between 'yes' and 'no' in man. If a man lives without inner struggle, if everything happens in him without opposition, if he goes wherever he is drawn or wherever the wind blows, he will remain such as he is. But if a struggle begins in him, and particularly if there is a definite line in this struggle, then, gradually, permanent traits begin to form themselves, he begins to 'crystallize'....

Crystallization is possible on any foundations. Take for example a brigand, a really good, genuine brigand. I knew such brigands in the Caucasus. He will stand with a rifle behind a stone by the roadside for eight hours without stirring. Could you do this? All the time, mind you, a struggle is going on in him. He is thirsty and hot, and flies are biting him; but he stands still. Another is a monk; he is afraid of the devil; all night long he beats his head on the floor and prays. Thus crystallization is achieved... Such people can become immortal..." (P.D. Ouspensky, "In Search of the Miraculous", London, 1969, pp. 31-32)

Let us now take account of the essential points in the quoted text. Firstly, it is the physical body which gives birth to what is called in the quotation the "astral body" which

will be the bearer of survival. Then, according to the text, immortality is neither a birthright of the human soul nor a gift of divine grace — it is made by means of the crystallization of a new body within the physical body which can resist death and survive the destruction of the physical body. That is to say, the soul created by God does not exist; it must be created by the human being from within the human physical body. Thus it is a quantity of energy crystallized within the human physical body and engendered through this latter, produced by friction or the struggle between "yes" and "no" in man. For both the robber and the monk, and also the occultist, can become immortal through the energy that they produce by their efforts.

It is a matter of a plan of construction, from within the physical body, of a t o w e r or a "house of four rooms" or levels (Ouspensky, ibid., p.44) rising from the sphere of mortality to that of immortality, from earth to heaven. Now, the Bible knows of the method of building "a tower with its top in the heavens" and of making "a name for ourselves lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis xi,4). It is the ideal and millennial-old method of construction of the "Tower of Babel". The "Tower of Babel" is a very ancient method. The following is what Gurdjieff says about it:

"According to an ancient teaching, traces of which may be found in many systems, old and new, a man who has attained the full development possible for man, a man in the full sense of the word, consists of four bodies. These four bodies are composed of substances which gradually become finer and finer, mutually interpenetrate one another, and form four independent organisms, standing in a definite relationship to one another but capable of independent action.

The reason why it is possible for four bodies to exist is that the human organism, that is, the physical body, has such a complex organization that, under certain conditions, a new independent organism can grow in it, affording a much more convenient and responsive instrument for the activity of consciousness than the physical body... In this second body, under certain conditions, a third body can grow, again having characteristics of its own... In the third body, under certain conditions, a fourth can grow, which differs as much from the third as the third differs from the second and the second from the first." (p.40)

"An Eastern teaching describes the functions of the four bodies, their gradual growth, and the conditions of this growth, in the following way:

Let us imagine a vessel or a retort filled with various metallic powders. The powders are not in any way connected with each other and every accidental change in the position of the retort changes the relative position of the powders... It is impossible to stabilize the interrelation of powders in a state of mechanical mixture. But the powders may be fused; the nature of the powders makes this possible. To do this a special kind of fire must be lighted under the retort which, by heating and melting the powders, finally fuses them together. Fused in this way the powders will be in the state of a chemical compound... The contents of the retort have become indivisible, "individual". This is a picture of the formation of the second body. The fire by means of which fusion is attained is produced by "friction", which in its turn is produced in man by the struggle between "yes" and "no"....

The process of imparting new properties to the alloy corresponds to the process of the formation of the third body... The process of fixing these acquired properties corresponds to the process of the formation of the fourth body. And only the man who possesses four fully developed bodies can be called a "man" in the full sense of the word. This man possesses many properties which ordinary man does not possess. One of these

properties is immortality." (P.D. Ouspensky, "In Search of the Miraculous", London, 1969, pp. 40, 43-44)

Now, the "special fire lit under the retort" is due to friction which is, in its turn, the product of the struggle between "yes" and "no". This fire is therefore what we understand by "electricity". It is therefore thanks to electricity, or energy produced by friction, that the process of crystallization works.

The architects of the Tower of Babel also made use of fire for the preparation of its materials of construction. "'Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar." (Genesis xi, 3).

The essence of the method of "construction of the Tower of Babel" is inverse crystallization. Normal crystallization — the "stone" — is the final state of the process of transition from the gaseous to the liquid state and from the liquid to the solid state. Thus vapor becomes water (liquid) and water becomes ice. Ice is crystallized vapor. Similarly, a general but warm intention becomes a current of discursive thought which, in its turn, results in a well-defined formula. Or in still other terms: the spiritual becomes psychic and the psychic becomes corporeal.

The process of normal crystallization is therefore one of concretization from above below: ↓ Spirit, Soul, Body.

The process of crystallization designated as the "construction of the Tower of Babel", takes place, in contrast, from below above: ↑ Spirit, Soul, Body.

With regard to this latter process, it is a matter of transformation into "body" of the psychic and spiritual. And it is thus that one can conquer death and realize immortality... corporeal immortality. For if the spiritual and the psychic, in becoming corporeal, become mortal, would it not be possible that corporeal, in rising to the psychic and spiritual, becomes immortal?

Is this scheme realizable or is it simply an illusion, pure and simple?

Although this question belongs to the framework of problems of the XVIth Major Arcanum of the Tarot, and although it will be treated in the XVIth Letter, let us nonetheless consider some facts with a view to coming to an answer.

The facts that I have in mind are those of corporeal survival, i.e. physical manifestations that one attributes — rightly or wrongly — to dead people or to "ghosts". "Ghosts" exist. This is not a question of belief; it is a matter of fact. There is an immense literature, without speaking of facts that one can find in the sphere of personal experience, which bears witness to the existence of "ghosts". Now it is no longer a matter of believing or denying; now it is a matter only of understanding and explaining. "Ghosts" exist therefore. Thus it happens from time to time after someone's death that this person or "something" of him or similar to him manifests in an outward and physical way (noises, movements, etc.) in the guise of an active energy. It is as if a certain quantity of energy, freed through death, but remaining condensed and not dispersed, manifests as an entity or as an individual "body".

An analysis of the manifestations of ghosts has enabled me to extract from them the following characteristic traits:-

1) a "ghost" is an entity made up of psycho-physiological electrical energy, with an inferior consciousness in comparison with that of a normal human person;

2) the consciousness which is revealed by the actions of a "ghost", and by its way of acting

in general, is very limited and extremely specialized — one is tempted to characterize it as "maniacal", since it manifests itself as the crystallization of a single passion, a single habit or a single fixed idea;

3) the energy of which the "ghost" is constituted becomes weakened with time — provided that it is not nourished by an affirmative and favorable attitude from its human entourage; it fades away. One can make it disappear through the Church ritual of exorcism, or by individual prayer, or lastly by a special action which demands courage and which consists in clasping and breathing in the "ghost", in such a way as to receive it into oneself and of oneself to make the electrical energy of the "ghost" dissipate. I dare not recommend this latter method because it entails the experience of an electric shock — which can be excessive — at the moment when the energy of the "ghost" passes into your organism. I may add, however, that it is this experience of an electric shock which gives absolute certainty with respect to the electrical nature of the "body" of the "ghost". At the same time it can also supply proof — in the inner forum of consciousness, it goes without saying — that the "ghost" is not the soul of the departed one, and that it is a burden to him, being bound to the soul of the departed by a heavy link of responsibility.

In the case that I have mentioned, soon after the dissipation of the "ghost's" electrical energy through its reception into oneself, the departed one hastens to make acknowledgement of his gratitude, by means of a very vivid and clear dream, for his deliverance from this heavy burden.

What, then, is a "ghost"? It is exactly what Gurdjieff teaches concerning the product of psychic crystallization effected from within the physical body, and which can resist the death of the latter. This is the "astral body" of which Gurdjieff said that, "if it is formed it may continue to live after the death of the physical body... if it is not re-born, then, in the course of time, it also dies; it is not immortal but it can live long after the death of the physical body" (Ouspensky, op. cit., p. 32). Of course, the "astral body" spoken of by Gurdjieff has nothing to do with the "astral body" of Hermeticism, which latter is, truth to tell, simply the totality of the soul's psychic memories. A "ghost" is always constituted as a consequence of crystallization, i.e. crystallization of a desire, a passion, or a purpose of great intensity, which produces a complex of energy in the human being. Thus, a "genuine brigand" who stands "with a rifle behind a stone by the roadside for eight hours without stirring" or "a monk... (who) is afraid of the devil (and) all night long he beats his head on the floor and prays" (Ouspensky, op. cit., p. 32) in fact crystallize within them a complex of energy, a psycho-electrical double, which would be able, as a dense complex, to resist death.

And the same thing that happens with human beings who are possessed by strong desires, passions and intentions can be achieved methodically by making use of the scientific method of the "construction of the Tower of Babel". Then one could not only animate the double crystallized from a desire, a passion or a dominant intention, but also equip it with an intellectual apparatus of very developed functioning and a mechanical memory in which all the facts of experience on the physical plane are accumulated. The "self" of such an occultist would then be allied to this double, who is the bearer of his memory and intellect, and could incarnate himself anew — avoiding purgatory and the whole path of purification, illumination and union which is the lot of the human soul after death.

It is therefore not purely and simply a matter of an illusion in the case of the ideal and method of the "construction of the Tower of Babel". Rather, it is a matter of another kind of immortality, notably that which the Serpent of Genesis had in mind when he said:- "You will not die if you eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil". For the fruit of the

Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil produces the inner friction in man of the struggle between "yes" and "no", and this friction in its turn produces the electrical fire which effects the crystallization whose product will resist death.

This is the meaning of the promise — or rather the program — of the Serpent. This program underlies the millennial-old method of the "construction of the Tower of Babel", and it constitutes the esoteric kernel or the hidden secret of materialistic science in general.

We have chosen Gurdjieff (and Ouspensky) to exemplify the ideal and the method of the "construction of the Tower of Babel", but Gurdjieff — being openly materialistic in the true sense of this word, and being deprived of all mystical sense — only spoke on behalf of the multitude. All he did was to give forth clearly what animates and impels — in an unconscious or semi-conscious way — millions and millions of scientists devoted to the cause of longevity, i.e. to the victory over death through human science, without God and without mysticism: the universal cause of the construction of the Tower of Babel.

Gurdjieff is simply a representative of the cause of materialistic science; he knew what it wants in reality and he also knew what he wanted himself. He was, moreover, a good-natured man, endowed with an exquisite sense of humor, a good son, a good friend, and very intelligent with respect to common sense — to indicate only the qualities that he possessed which leap out at one. It would therefore be wrong to see in him a "prophet of darkness" or an instrument of a special "Satanic mission". No, he was simply a good representative of the "wisdom of this world", i.e. of good sense and empirical experience without any mystical inclination. Gurdjieff was not any more a "Satanist" than the celebrated Russian physiologist Pavlov or any other representative of materialistic science.

Assuredly, his practical and theoretical teaching of crystallization from below above is not compatible either with Carl JUNG's process of individuation or with Christian Hermeticism or with the Cabbala. For Hermeticism also teaches a crystallization but it is a crystallization from above below, i.e. the crystallization of which Hermeticism itself — in so far as it is philosophy and knowledge — is the product: crystallized mysticism being gnosis, crystallized gnosis being magic, and crystallized magic being this philosophy and knowledge which passes under the name of "Hermeticism". Thus if one disregards the intermediary stages, one could say that Hermeticism is crystallized mysticism, whilst Gurdjieff's materialistic occultism replaces — and abolishes — mysticism by crystallized materialistic science.

In returning to the question posed at the beginning of this Letter: Did the Serpent of Genesis simply lie? — we are now able to answer: no, he did not lie. He opposed to divine immortality another immortality: that of crystallization from below above, or the "Tower of Babel". He advanced the bold program — but real and realizable — aiming at a mankind which would be composed of the living and of ghosts, with the latter reincarnating almost without delay and avoiding the way which leads through purgatory to Heaven.

You see now, dear Unknown Friend, why the Church was hostile to the doctrine of reincarnation, although the fact of repeated incarnations was known — and could not remain unknown — to a large number of people faithful to the Church with authentic spiritual experience. The deeper reason is the danger of reincarnation by way of the "ghost", where one avoids the path of purification (in purgatory), illumination and celestial union. For humanity could succumb to the temptation of preparing for a future terrestrial life, instead of

preparing for purgatory and heaven, during earthly life. To prepare for a future terrestrial life, instead of preparing for the confrontation with Eternity, amounts to crystallization in the sense of the formation of an electric double — the body of the ghost — which could, in its turn, serve as the bridge from one incarnation to another and be the means of evading purgatory and the confrontation with Eternity. One ought during earthly life to prepare for this meeting with a fully awakened consciousness, which is purgatory, and for the experience of the Presence of the Eternal, which is Heaven, and not to prepare for a future terrestrial life, which would amount to the crystallization of the "body" of a ghost. It is worth a hundred times more to know nothing of the fact of reincarnation, and to deny the doctrine of reincarnation, than to turn thoughts and desires towards the future terrestrial life and thus to be tempted to resort to the means offered through the promise of immortality made by the Serpent. This is why, I repeat, the Church was, from the beginning, hostile to the idea of reincarnation and did all that it could so that this idea would not take root in consciousness — and above all in the human will.

I confess that it is only after hesitation, due to objections of a very serious moral order, that I have decided to write of the danger that the doctrine of reincarnation entails, and above all of that abuse that can be — and is, in fact — made of it. It is the faith that you, dear Unknown Friend, understand the weight of responsibility that weighs on each person who sees himself treating reincarnation not as belonging to the domain of esoteric (i.e. intimate) experience, but as an exoteric teaching to popularize — called to convince everyone — which has determined me to speak of the practical abuse of the fact of reincarnation. I <u>implore</u> you therefore, dear Unknown Friend, to have the good will to examine, in the light of moral conscience, the question whether the way of treating reincarnation in exoteric teaching that has been adopted and is practiced in general both by representatives of the French occult movement of the XIXth and XXth centuries and by Theosophists, Anthroposophists, "Rosicrucians", etc., is justified and desirable.

I may add that in the last analysis it is a matter not only of the moral danger of evading purgatory and the experience of Eternity, but also of <u>replacing one immortality by another</u>, namely that of God by that of the Serpent.

For there are <u>two</u> deaths and two immortalities.

The "death" of which the father speaks in the parable of the prodigal son:-

"my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (Luke xv, 24) — is <u>remoteness from the Father and his house</u>, while the death of the physical body means remoteness from the physical plane and the electrical field of terrestrial gravitation (which was the matter in question in the XIIth Letter, concerning the Arcanum "The Hanged Man"). Now, the refusal to take the way of purgatory and heaven amounts to refusing to return to the house of the Father, i.e. the decision to remain <u>remote</u> from the Father. And it is precisely this which is <u>death</u> in a divine sense. <u>Complete crystallization</u> is therefore complete death from the divine point of view, whilst complete life is the state of "radiating as the sun", i.e. that of <u>complete de-crystallization</u>. Thus the divine words, "You shall not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat of it you will die," state simply that "the day when you eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, <u>you will remove yourself from Me</u>". And the promise of the Serpent: You will not die — means to say: "You will live remote from God and it will be I who shall attend to the uninterrupted continuation of your life in the horizontal, for I shall make up for the lack of divine wisdom and love by replacing them

with the intellect and with psycho-physical electricity, which will be the source of your life".

Therefore the Serpent understands by "life" what God understands by "death" — and vice versa.

Now, Hermeticism — Christian Hermeticism as well as ancient and pre-Christian Hermeticism has always advanced the fundamental thesis of all true mysticism, true gnosis, and true sacred magic, that there is <u>vertical</u> Life and Death and that there is a <u>horizontal</u> life and death:

Life

Death Life

Death

And that the Cross of humanity — the Cross of Calvary — is that of two opposed lives and deaths. Resurrection is not only the triumph of Life over Death, but is moreover the triumph of Life over life. It is the victory of the vertical over the horizontal, of radiation over crystallization. This is why when the women who went to the tomb at the break of day did not find the body of Lord Jesus, the two men who appeared to them in resplendent apparel said to them, "Why do you seek the living <u>among the dead</u>?" (Luke xxiv, 5).

Therefore, let us no longer seek amongst the dead for he who is living, and above all let us not seek for immortal Life in the domain of death — in the domain of the intellect borne by electricity or, to employ an image borrowed from the Cabbala, in the domain of Samael mounted on the dragon.

It is not phantoms and ghosts which are the source of certainty of survival or immortality. The source of this certainty is found elsewhere. Where, then?

— In the experience of the kernel of the human being and his relationship with the Breath, Light and Warmth of God.

Certainty of immortality issues from the participation experienced in that which is intrinsically indestructible and imperishable, and therefore immortal. He who has had experience of the kernel of his being, i.e. he who has once been <u>truly himself</u>, permeated by the Divine Breath, bathed in Divine Light and ardent with Divine Warmth, he <u>knows</u> what immortality is and that he is immortal. You will have beautifully explained to him the "epiphenomenal nature" of consciousness, i.e. that consciousness is only the functioning of the brain and nervous system and that it is like the rainbow — a play of colors resulting from the refraction and reflection of solar rays on the clouds — you will have beautifully said all this, and he will have not even a little grain of doubt that all this is false and the contrary is true. Perhaps he would not be able to find valid arguments <u>for you</u> against epiphenomenalism, but as for <u>him</u>, he has no need of them. For it is not to arguments that he owes his certainty, but rather to experience.

Imagine the reaction of a Saint John of the Cross or a Saint Teresa of Avila to a discourse, armed with all the arguments of modern science, addressed to them so as to prove to them that the soul is only a mirage produced by chemical and electrical reactions of the organism! To prove this to them! — they who many times went out of the body, left in a state of complete insensibility, and returned full of life and light drawn not only from beyond all chemical and electrical reactions but also from beyond all sense imagery and all intellectual activity!

I think that they would have sent the author of such remarks either to a psychiatrist or to an exorcist.

Certainty in immortality can thus be <u>absolute</u>, i.e. in no way dependent on the validity or invalidity of arguments, nor on the good or bad attestation of outer facts. It is when man has

had experience of the kernel of his own being and of his essential relationship with God.

I certainly know the logical, philosophical and psychological criticism of the Cartesian argument, C o g i t o e r g o s u m (I think therefore I am), and I accept it without reserve *in foro scientiae*, but it was not the force of this argument in the tribunal of science which gave René DESCARTES certainty of his transcendent Self, the kernel of his being, but rather the *experience* in the tribunal of consciousness (*in foro conscientiae*) where, whilst thinking in the admirable way which was characteristic of him, he went out of discursive t h o u g h t and found himself suddenly as the T h i n k e r of thoughts! It was therefore not a logical *argument* but a real and intimate experience of Thought — in the process of thinking — which gave Descartes complete certainty of the reality of the "I am" which manifests itself in the "I think".

The German philosopher Immanuel KANT (a soul of childlike purity, endowed with a remarkable honesty and diligence!) made Descartes' spontaneous experience a new method of inner effort aspiring to knowledge, namely the *transcendental method*. This method amounts to the effort to transcend the thinking in which the thinker is ordinarily immersed, by going out from it and elevating himself above it, in order to *observe* thought — or "to think about thought" — from a point of observation taken *above discursive thought*. KANT's "Copernican discovery" consists above all in detaching the Thinker from "naive thought", i.e. from the state where the thinker is lost in the process of thought, being immersed in it, so as to occupy a point situated above thought, from where the thinker can examine what is thought in an entirely detached way and with implacable and incorruptible truthfulness — this is the "transcendental criticism" of Kant. His works "Critique of Pure Reason" and "Critique of Judgement" (Kritik der Urteilskraft) are the fruits of the application of this method in the sense of the *revision* of the totality of our knowledge, and in the sense of a clear investigation of the pretensions of the intellect and of the senses to being able to judge things belonging to the metaphysical domain — for example, God, the immortality of the soul, and moral freedom. With respect to his "Critique of Practical Reason" we find here, beyond the results of the critical look of the thinker turned towards the domain of discursive thought and sense perceptions in which he had been immersed before, in addition what the Thinker, this kernel of the human being, has to say himself. This can be summarized as follows:—

> "I would have to alter the foundation of my very being, or to annihilate myself, if I were to say that God does not exist, that I am not free, and that I am not immortal. The very *structure* of my being is such that it postulates categorically the existence of God or infinite perfectibility, freedom or morality as such, and the immortality of the soul or the possibility of infinite perfectioning."

It goes without saying that just as René Descartes' argument "I think therefore I am" became the object of the annihilating criticism of logicians, philosophers and psychologists, so is the fundamental argument advanced by Immanuel Kant in his "Critique of Practical Reason" the subject of a no less severe criticism — and no less founded *in foro scientiae* — than in the case of Descartes' argument. But here also it is necessary to say that it was not a *logical conclusion* or an argument of discursive thought which gave Kant certainty of God, freedom and immortality, but rather the real and intimate *experience* that he had when he practiced his transcendental method. This latter evidently proved

itself to be an authentic spiritual exercise, which led Kant to arrive at experience of the kernel of his being — just as Descartes arrived there — and from which he drew the threefold certainty: the reality of God, the reality of moral Freedom and, lastly, the reality of the soul's immortality.

Similarly, in Hindu Jnana-Yoga the yogi arrives at the transcendent Self by critically observing firstly his body and arriving at the experience, "This body is not the Self", then critically examining his psychic life — desires, feelings, memory, images, etc. — to arrive at the experience, "This psychic life is not the Self", and, lastly, critically examining his thinking itself, from which he detaches himself, and experiences the Thinker — just as Descartes and Kant arrived at the experience of the transcendent Self by rising from thought to the Thinker. From this comes their certainty of "I am" (Descartes) and "I am free, I am immortal (and) I am in the presence of God" (Kant).

May the criticism of Descartes and Kant eventually become silent, restraining itself through understanding; may it no more interfere with that at which these two spirits arrived at, namely the intimate experience of the kernel of their being, the transcendent Self! May it one day cease from being repeated to satiety that Kant "proved himself to be unfaithful to his own method and to have betrayed his own principles" and that, in growing old and becoming senile, he "sank into the Fideism of his youth"! For the truth is that Kant betrayed nothing and did not sink into anything, but that he arrived at the ripe fruit of his life and work. Or would one wish that he had not arrived anywhere, and that he had finished his life as a master of criticism and doubt only? That the honest and assiduous effort of his life had not brought any experience, and therefore any certainty, with regard to things belonging to the metaphysical sphere? Instead of rejoicing in and celebrating the fact of his certainty, one speaks of his lapse and one accuses him of unfaithfulness! My God, how petty!

You see therefore, dear Unknown Friend, that the great thinkers of the West — just as the Hindu yogis — have arrived at the experience of the kernel of the human being, the transcendent Self, the experience of which gave them certainty of immortality.

Christian Hermeticism, being a synthesis of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic, offers humanity three methods of experience, beyond the "philosophical" method outlined above, for arriving at the certainty of immortality.

There is in the first place the traditional mystical way of purification, illumination and union, which is the voluntary and conscious experience of the three stages of the way of the human soul after death — through purgatory to heaven, and from heaven to God. You will find this not only with the great Christian mystics such as Dionysius the Areopagite, Bonaventura, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross...., not only in the pre-Christian teachings of the Hermetic treatises attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, such as "The Divine Pymander", but also in the Great Mysteries of pagans, Egyptians, and others, where the three stages of "Katharsis" (purification), "photismos" (illumination) and "henosis" (union, or identification with the Divine) give consciousness of the post-mortem states and certainty of immortality. Jean Marques-Rivière says concerning this:-

> "(This is) the essential teaching of Egyptian esotericism as well as that of the Greeks: the knowledge of states after death, in order to overcome fear of this death, psychological and human fear. The initiate had knowledge of what awaited him; what could he be

afraid of?" (Jean Marques-Rivière, "Histoire des doctrines ésotériques", Paris, 1950, p. 90)

Just as the practice of concentration is the "art of forgetting" and the practice of profound communion, or meditation, is the mastering of the "art of sleeping", so does the contemplation of authentic initiation signify the mastering of the "art of dying". It is through mastering forgetting, sleep and death that one arrived in the past, that one arrives today, and that one will arrive in the future, at the mystical experience of the soul united with God, and therefore at the absolute certainty of immortality. And one arrived there, one arrives there, and one will arrive there through the three stages of the eternal mystical way: those of purification, illumination and union. Saint John of the Cross shows that it is authentic faith which is revealed, acts and increases in purification; that it is hope which is simultaneously both the agent and the fruit of illumination; and that, lastly, it is charity which achieves union of the soul with God (cf. John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" book II, chap. v).

This is the eternal way, and no one can invent or find another. One can certainly divide it into thirty-three stages — or even into ninety-nine, if one wished; one can re-clothe it in intellectual vestments, or beautiful and simple symbolism; one can present it in diverse terminology — Sanskrit, Cabbalistic, Greek, Latin, etc. But one will always have to do with the sole way — and always the same way — of eternal mysticism: the way of purification, illumination and union. Because there is no other, and there has never been another, and there will never be any other.

Hermeticism, also, has no other way to offer than that of eternal mysticism — the gnostic, magical and philosophical methods being founded on it. In other words, one cannot dispense with purification in order to become a gnostic or a mage or even a philosopher (in the true and original sense of this word). Nor can one any more dispense with illumination in gnosis, in sacred magic and in philosophy (again in the true and original sense of this word). For a non-illumined gnostic would not be a gnostic, but rather an "oddball"; a non-illumined mage would be only a sorceror; and a non-illumined philosopher would be either a complete skeptic or an amateur at "intellectual play". And with respect to the primary source from whence the gnostic draws his revelation, the mage his power, and the philosopher his enlightenment — there is only one: the more or less immediate contact of the soul with God. It is therefore always the same way on which one advances, without regard to whether one employs the mystical, gnostic, magical or philosophical method.

There are many tracks but there is only one way. This means to say that whatever one does, one advances and grows only in the sense of purification, illumination and union; and that whatever one knows and whatever experience one has, the criterion of true progress is solely progress in purification, illumination and union. One judges a tree by its fruits; one judges the mystic, gnostic, mage and philosopher by their faith, hope and charity, i.e. by their progress in purification, illumination and union.

Spiritual greatness, the calibre of a soul, is measured only through faith, hope and love or charity. Buddha certainly saw that the world is sick — and, considering it incurable, he taught the means to leave it. Christ, also, saw that the world is sick unto death, but he considered it curable and set to work the force for healing the world — that which manifests itself through the Resurrection. Here is the difference between the faith, hope and love of the Master of Nirvana and that of the Master of the Resurrection and the Life. The former said to the world: you are incurable; here is the means for putting an end to your suffering — to your

life. The latter said to the world: you are curable; here is the remedy for saving your life.

Two doctors, the same diagnosis — but a world of difference in the treatment!

Tradition teaches — and every serious esotericist and occultist knows that it is so — that the Archangel M I C H A E L is the archistrategist, i.e. that he directs the celestial army. Why is he in charge? Because his faith, hope and love are such that they have put him in charge. For "to be in charge" signifies in the spiritual world to be less subject than others to doubt, despair and condemning judgement.

Tradition teaches that the archangel M I C H A E L represents the SUN, and similarly the archangel G A B R I E L - the MOON, the archangel R A P H A E L - MERCURY, the archangel A N A E L - VENUS, Z A C H A R I E L - JUPITER, O R I P H I E L - SATURN, and S A M A E L - MARS. Why the Sun? Because the Sun is the visible symbol, the image itself of faith, hope and love. It sheds light on the good and the wicked, without leaving or quitting its central post.

Yes, the greatness of God himself, i.e. of what is divine for us in him, is not his power in the sense that he is stronger than the totality of forces in the universe, nor his foreknowledge in the sense that he foresees, as a perfect engineer, the future functioning of the forces of the world machine, pre-calculated and pre-determined, nor even the fact that he is absolutely indispensable as the center of all gravitation — spiritual, psychic and physical — of the universe. No, what is truly divine in God, i.e. what makes every knee bow before him, is his faith, his hope and his love. For just as we believe in God, so also does God believe in us — but with a divinely greater and more elevated faith; his hope with regard to this immense community of free beings that we call the "world" is infinite, just as his love for these beings is infinite.

We do not worship God because he is able to do more than us, or because he knows more than us, but rather because he has more faith, more hope and more love than us. Our God is infinitely noble and generous, and not only all-powerful and all-informed!

God is great through his faith, hope and love — and the fear of God is basically that of offending such nobleness and generosity!

Now, Christian Hermeticism is based on the way of eternal mysticism; with regard to its practice, this is its basis and its point of departure. Point of departure — where? In the domain of gnosis and in that of sacred magic, just as in the domain of Hermetic philosophy.

Gnosis — which, it goes without saying, has nothing to do with any method borrowed from the teachings of gnostic sects or with their articles of faith — is the contribution of mystical experience to understanding and memory. It is distinguished from pure mysticism in that the latter amounts to the experience in which the will — purified and illumined — is in union with the divine, whilst understanding and memory are excluded from it and remain outside of the threshold of mystical experience. And it is precisely the fact of the non-participation of understanding and memory in mystical experience which renders it inexpressible and incommunicable. Gnosis, on the other hand, is the same mystical experience with the participation of understanding and memory, which pass the threshold together with the will and remain in a state of wakefulness. It is schooling by means of symbolism which renders them capable of participating in the mystical experience of the will without lapsing. They participate only as witnesses, i.e. they maintain complete silence and only play the role of a mirror. But the result of their presence as witnesses to the mystical experience of the will is the ability to express and communicate this experience. This is because understanding and

memory have received an impression of it. And this impression is what we understand here by "gnosis". A mystic is a gnostic in so far as, and as much as, he can express and communicate to others his experiences. "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (I John iv,16) – this is a mystical statement. "God is the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit" – this is a gnostic statement. Or, "I and my Father are one" (John x,30) – mystical statement; "In my Father's house are many rooms" (John xiv, 2) – gnostic statement.

Gnosis is therefore the fruit of the silent participation of understanding and memory in the mystical experience of the will. I say "silent participation" because otherwise, i.e. in the case of active participation, it would no longer be a matter of revelation, but rather of a statement produced by the understanding and imagination. For in order to apprehend one has to listen, and to listen one has to be silent. The faculty of understanding and that of memory or imagination must be silent if they want to apprehend, i.e. to receive a revelation from above.

Just as gnosis is the fruit of the participation of understanding and memory in the mystical union of the will with God, so is sacred magic the fruit of the participation of the three forces of the soul in mystical union with God with regard to one's neighbor and to Nature. When the soul, having had the experience of union with the Divine, turns towards its neighbor and towards Nature, not in order to contemplate but in order to act – then the soul becomes that of a mage.

Every mystic is a mage in as much as and in so far as he acts, being inspired by his mystical experience. Sacred magic is the putting into action of what the mystic contemplates and what the gnostic apprehends through revelation.

Hermetic philosophy, lastly, draws its conclusions from mystical, gnostic and magical experiences and works with a view to setting these in accord with the experiences of terrestrial life and with the sciences which are occupied therewith.

It is thus that Hermeticism can give "trismegistic" – thrice greatest – certainty of immortality, i.e. the threefold certainty of mystical, gnostic and magical experience.

As you see, this certainty is produced in three – or four – stages of descending revelatory movement, from above below. It is what tradition calls the "descent of the heavenly Jerusalem", as opposed to the method outlined above of the "construction of the Tower of Babel". Christian (and pre-Christian) Hermeticism therefore belongs decidedly to the extended tradition which practices the method of the "descent of the heavenly Jerusalem", which works in the history of mankind with a view to preparing the whole of mankind for the future spiritual event of the "descent of the heavenly Jerusalem" on a universal scale. For the "descent of the heavenly Jerusalem" is at the same time a practical method of spiritual schools. The totality of inner mystical, gnostic and magical experiences of individuals, the gradual transformation of the whole of human civilization into a "celestial city", i.e. where the laws are those of Heaven, and, lastly, the Reintegration of the whole of Nature, which is a work of cosmic significance, together comprise the realization of a "new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation xxi, 1), where the world is healed. The "descent of the heavenly Jerusalem" therefore comprises the most intimate experiences of individual souls as well as the history and evolution of our planet – according to the law: "... nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known" (Matthew x,26), for everything that takes place in subjective intimacy will one day become objective reality. It is the magical law of history that the subjective at some time becomes objective, that the

aspirations, thoughts and feelings of today become the events of history tomorrow." For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea viii, 7).

This leads me to return to the Card of the thirteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot. Here we see that Death reaps hands, feet, and lastly heads, which appear above the level of the black soil. He does not reap growing grass or whole human figures — which, moreover, are not to be found here.

Death acts as the guardian of a determined level, and cuts off every member of the human body which appears above this level. It acts as a surgeon rather than as an exterminator. -- What kind of surgeon is it?

We have spoken above of the method and ideal of the "construction of the Tower of Babel", i.e. the method and ideal where one makes electrical energy ascend, after having animated and intellectualized it, from the physical organism to higher planes — firstly to the vital or etheric plane, the plane where "grass grows", according to the Card of the thirteenth Arcanum.

This ascent, provided that it is not effected methodically and in full knowledge of its action, i.e. within an occult school, in practice takes place partially — sometimes it is only the "electric hands" which succeed in ascending to the vital or etheric plane, sometimes it is the "feet", and sometimes it is only the "head". Now, Death on our Card sees to it that the vital world is not invaded by "emissaries" from the physical world. It cuts off, as a true surgeon, the electrical "members" of the physical body which appear above the level — which is the threshold of the two worlds — where the realm of the vital world begins. It therefore accomplishes amputations of sick members — "sick" in the sense that they have usurped a domain of existence which does not legitimately belong to them — before the sickness becomes irremediable.

What Death does in this Card is therefore to act as a guardian of the threshold between the two worlds and, correspondingly, to apply a kind of surgery.

Now, in general, is not Death the principle of surgery in the world? Is it called to kill, to destroy, or does it not have a mission to heal through surgery?

The answer that I propose, dear Unknown Friend, is that Death is certainly the principle of surgery in the world. It affects the amputation of members that become unusable — even the totality of unusable members, ie. the whole physical body — so as to free the whole human being.

Just as there is natural medicine which reestablishes health through the rules and habits of a sound life — diet, sleep, breathing, exercises, etc. — and just as there is homeopathic medicine which heals by helping the whole organism to overcome the sickness, and just as there is allopathic medicine, which combats sickness through opposites, and just as, lastly, there is surgery which saves the life of the organism by sacrificing part of it, so there is in the world a healing "mechanism" analogously hierarchical to the hierarchical scale of natural, homeopathic, allopathic and surgical medicine.

Death corresponds to surgery in the cosmic hospital. It is the last expedient to save life. Beyond it there are three further principles for maintaining and reestablishing health in the world and in individual beings. These correspond to mysticism, gnosis and magic. Thus in paraphrasing a slogan from the French revolution, one could say:

"M y s t i c i s m , g n o s i s , m a g i c — or d e a t h."

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Letter XIV : Meditation on the Fourteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot - "Temperance" - "La Tempérance"

Exaudi nos, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeterne Deus, et mittere digneris sanctum Angelum tuum de coelis, qui custodiat, foveat, protegat, visitat atque defendat omnes habitantes in hoc habitaculo.

(Hear us, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, and deign to send your holy Angel from heaven, to guard, cherish, protect, visit and defend all who are gathered together in this place.)

(Liturgical prayer of the introductory service preceding the solemn Mass)

Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. (John iv, 13-14)

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. (John iii, 5)

"By upbringing and intellectual training, I belong to the "children of Heaven"; but by temperament, and by my professional studies, I am a "child of the Earth". Situated thus by life at the heart of two worlds with whose theory, idiom and feelings intimate experience has made me familiar, I have not erected any watertight bulkhead inside myself. <u>On the contrary, I have allowed two apparently conflicting influences full freedom to react upon one another deep within me.</u>"

(Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: "Comment je crois", Intr.; trsl. R. Hague, "How I Believe", London, 1969, p. 7)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The Card of the Fourteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot places us in the presence of an angel in a robe which is half red and half blue, who is accomplishing — or presiding over the accomplishment of — a strange act, where he is pouring colorless water from one vase into another, or rather he is making it gush almost horizontally between the two vases, at an

angle of about 45 degrees, the vases being held at a considerable distance from one another.

An intellectual shock therefore. Therefore an arcanum — something which one has to take hold of and apprehend beyond the usual plane of experience and thought. This invites us, therefore, to profound meditation — to a spiritual exercise.

Let us follow this invitation.

What is the problem that the Card, that its whole context, arouses spontaneously in the mind of he who looks at it attentively? What is the message of the angel with two wings, in the red and blue robe, holding two vases, one red and one blue, and making water gush in a mysterious way from one vase to the other? Is he not the one who bears the good news that beyond the duality of "either-or" there is — or is possible — still that of "not only - but also" or "both-and"? Does not the totality of the Card, the angel of the Card, suggest the problem of cooperating polarity, or integrated duality? Does it not first of all suggest the presentiment or suspicion that perhaps it is thanks to the two wings, the two arms, the two colors of the robe, the two vases, that the water pours forth? That this water is the fruit and the gift of the "both-and" of integrated duality, which jumps to one's attention as one looks at the Card?

Thus the idea which is presented first of all to the mind, in the presence of the Card of the fourteenth Arcanum, belongs to the range of ideas relating to polarity and what this latter offers in possibilities for the spiritual knowledge and realization — mystical, gnostic and magical — of the Hermeticist.

In preceding Letters there has already been the question, in diverse connections, of a twofold polarity — that of "polemic" (war), which produces energy of an "electrical" kind, and that of cooperation or "peace", which releases force of a "vital" nature. Now, the angel of the Card of the fourteenth Arcanum invites us to return to the problem of this double polarity and twofold dynamic, in promising to throw new light on this subject. Let us therefore return to this.

— An expert of the first order in spiritual life and authentic spiritual experience, Saint Bernard of CLAIRVAUX, has bequeathed to posterity a doctrine of fundamental importance. This is his doctrine of the divine image and likeness of man.

This doctrine lends itself admirably to serve as a point of departure for a thorough-going investigation of this twofold polarity. The following are its essential points:

God made man "in his image and likeness" (Genesis i, 26). The divine image and the divine likeness coincided in the first man, before the original sin. But their coincidence did not persist after the Fall. The image has remained intact, but the initial likeness has been lost. Man is, following the original sin, in the "disfigurement of unlikeness", whilst conserving the image.

> "Man was made in the image and likeness of God: in image he possesses freedom of will, and in likeness he possesses virtues. The likeness has been destroyed; however, man conserves the image. The image can be burnt in hell, but not consumed. It is damaged but not destroyed. Through fate as such it is not effaced, but subsists. Wherever the soul is, there also will be the image. It is not so with the likeness. This

remains in the soul which accomplishes the good; in the soul which sins it is wretchedly transformed. The soul which has sinned ranks with beasts devoid of intelligence"

— says Saint Bernard in his sermon on the Annuciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (St. Bernard of Clairvaux, "Oeuvres de Saint Bernard", French trsl. M. M. Davy, vol. i, p. 106).

The image is therefore, according to Saint Bernard, the <u>essential structure</u> of the human being and the likeness in him is the totality of functions or the <u>functional structure</u>. It is the essential structure of the human being, the image, which is indestructible and which establishes freedom in an inalienable and irremovable way.

Man <u>is</u> free, and remains so through all eternity — on earth, in hell, in purgatory, in heaven — always and everywhere. F r e e d o m is therefore an <u>absolute fact</u>. As such, it entails immortality — the argument that one finds again in Immanuel KANT's "Critique of Practical Reason", for what is his "categorical imperative" if not the divine image in man?

With respect to the likeness or totality of <u>functions</u> of the human being, a hotbed of sin, with its attractions towards evil, has taken root there. And it is immortal only in proportion to the measure that it conforms again to its image. Its immortality is optional.

This is the essence of St. Bernard's doctrine. It gives rise to the question: If the divine image in man has not undergone any weakening and if the divine likeness in him has partly abrogated and has had to make way for inclinations and habits tending towards evil, is there something in human life which counterbalances the bad inclinations in man's functional organism, opposing good inclinations to them? Yes. There is certainly something added to man's functional organism to play in it the role of a counterweight to the leverage of vicious inclinations and habit which have become established since the primordial Fall. <u>This is the Guardian Angel</u>.

The Guardian Angel accompanies as a faithful ally the divine image in man, just as vicious inclinations have made their way into the human functional organism which was, before the Fall, the divine likeness. The Guardian Angel undertakes the functions, destroyed by original sin, in the likeness, and fills the breach wrought by them. He substitutes himself for functions destroyed through the Fall.

As the prayer of the service of aspersion (that I have put at the head of this Letter) states it, in praying to God "to deign to send from heaven his holy Angel to <u>guard</u>, <u>cherish</u>, <u>protect</u>, <u>visit</u> and <u>defend</u> all those who are gathered together in this place", the Angel acquits his charge in five ways: he guards, cherishes, protects, visits and defends.

He is therefore a "flaming star", a luminous pentagram, above man.

He <u>guards memory</u>, i.e. the continuity of the great Past in the present, which is the preparation for the great Future. It is the Guardian Angel who takes care that there is a connection between the great Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow of the human soul. He is a perpetual "memento" with regard to the primordial likeness, with regard to the eternal mission assigned to the soul in the cosmic symphony, and with regard to the special room for the soul "in my Father's house, where there are many rooms" (John xiv, 2). If it is necessary, the Guardian Angel awakens recollections of the soul's previous earthly lives, in order to establish continuity of endeavor — of the quest and aspiration of the soul from life to life — so that particular lives are not merely isolated episodes but constitute the stages of a <u>single</u>

path towards one sole end.

The Guardian Angel cherishes the endeavor, quest and aspiration of the soul engaged on this way. This means to say that he fills in the breaks in the psychic functional organism due to the disfigurement of the likeness, and makes up for its failings — given the soul's good will towards it. For support never signifies substitution of the Angel's will for that of man. The will remains free, always and everywhere. The Guardian Angel never touches on man's free will and resigns himself to await the decision or choice made in the inviolable sanctuary of free will — in order to lend his assistance immediately if it is just — or to remain a passive observer reduced alone to prayer if it is not.

Just as the Guardian Angel is sometimes constrained not to participate in the soul's activity — this activity not being in accord with the divine image of the soul — so also he can sometimes take a greater part in human activity than usual — this activity being of a nature not simply permitted but also called for. Then the Guardian Angel descends from the point of his ordinary post into the domain of human activity. He then visits the human being.

Such "visits" of the Guardian Angel do sometimes take place — when their possibility and necessity coincide. But what the Guardian Angel does unceasingly is to protect the human being. Here he makes up for the failings of the human senses, which are deprived of their clairvoyance from before the original sin. He is the clairvoyant helping the non-clairvoyant with respect to psychic and physical temptations and dangers. He warns, informs and helps to appreciate. Nevertheless, what he never does is to suppress the occasions themselves of temptation. For, as St. Anthony the Great said — "without temptation there is no spiritual progress". Temptation belongs as an integral part to the exercise of human free will, which is inviolable — both for an Angel and for a demon.

With respect to the last of the five functions of the Guardian Angel concerning man, namely his defense, it differs from the others in that it is turned above, towards heaven, and is no longer directed below or horizontally.

In dealing with the question of the defense that the Guardian Angel accords to his protégé, we approach the holy mystery of the very heart of the Guardian Angel. For the nature of angelic love is revealed here, of which the following are some indications.

Guardian Angels remain above their protégés. This means to say, amongst other things, that they screen him from heaven, from the look directed below from above. The fact that human beings on earth are screened by their Guardian Angels from Divine Justice signifies — other than guarding, supporting, protecting and contacting — that Guardian Angels are the defenders, the advocates, of man before Divine Justice. Just as Moses said to the Lord, when the children of Israel had committed the mortal sin of having preferred a god made of gold to the Living God," forgive their sin! — and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy Book which thou hast written" (Exodus xxxii, 32), so do Guardian Angels "cover" their protégés before the face of Divine Justice. This amounts to the declaration — whether explicit or implicit is not important — "Forgive them their sins! If not, efface us from the Book of Life that you have written". This is the defense of Guardian Angels for their protégés.

The Guardian Angel covers his protégé with his wings, in conferring on him his own merits before the eyes of Divine Justice and also in taking on himself the faults of his protégé

before the eyes of Divine Justice. It is as if he says," If the lightning of divine wrath must strike my protégé, my child, may it strike me instead of him — or if he must be struck, may it strike both of us together!"

The Guardian Angel defends his protégé like a mother defends her child, without regard to whether he may be good or bad. It is the mystery of maternal love which lives in the heart of the Guardian Angel. Not all Angels are Guardian Angels; there are others who have diverse missions. But Guardian Angels, in so far as they are Guardian Angels, are "mothers" of their protégés.

This is why traditional art presents them as winged females. And this is why the Card of the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot also openly presents the Angel as a winged female, dressed in a woman's robe, half-blue and half-red.

Guardian Angels — or should I use the feminine form, "Angelines"? — are the manifestation of high and pure maternal love. For this reason the Holy Virgin and Mother of God bears the liturgical title "Regina Angelorum" — Queen of the Angels. It is the maternal love in her that she has in common with the Guardian Angels and which, in surpassing theirs, makes her their queen.

There are, as I said above, other Angels who are not Guardian Angels. I am not speaking of the eight celestial hierarchies above that of the Angels; I am speaking solely of the hierarchy of the Angels, i.e. of the ninth celestial hierarchy.

There are Angels who are "messengers", i.e. "angels" (angeloi — messengers in Greek) in the proper sense of the word; there are Angels with special missions and tasks — Angels of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin, Death, Life, Karma, Relationships (between different spheres), Revelations of Wisdom, Knowledge, Ascetic Discipline — and many others. Many of them represent paternal love, or rather fraternal love.

Here I do not want to say anything either for or against what SWEDENBORG says concerning the sex of angels, but what I would like to portray here is the maternal love of Guardian Angels, and that there are other Angels who represent paternal love and also fraternal love. And it is in this sense — and only in this sense — that I would like you, dear Unknown Friend, to think of the Angels as entities in whom prevails either the tenderness of maternal love or the justice of paternal love. For what it is a matter of is not to project earthly sexuality upon heaven, but rather, on the contrary, to see in the former a reflection — although often disfigured — of the polarity from above. I may add that the Jewish Cabbala — above all the Zohar — teaches admirably the lesson of thinking of things here below as the reflection of things from above, and not inversely. The Zohar is truly one of the better schools of purity and chastity concerning all that relates to Husband and Wife, Father and Mother, Son and Daughter, Fiancé and Fiancée, at one and the same time in the spiritual, soul and physical worlds. For true chastity is not to refuse to look at and to see, or even to deny, but rather to see the celestial prototypes through and beyond things here below. And it is this chastity that one finds and apprehends in the Zohar, the Book of Splendor of the Jewish Cabbala.

But let us return to Guardian Angels.

The Angels, including Guardian Angels, live and move exclusively in the vertical. Ascent and descent constitute the law of their life, their respiration. They ascend towards God; they descend

towards mankind.

It is said that the Angels are in perpetual contemplation of God. They are, if one understands by contemplation the state of being in permanent contact with the Holy Trinity and of being blinded by its light. It is the "dark contemplation" of which St. John of the Cross spoke which is that of the Angels. They do not <u>see</u> God; they are united to him substantially. With respect to Guardian Angels, neither do they see one another, nor do they see entities of the other hierarchies — Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. For the presence of transcendental divine light in them envelops in darkness their perception of the intermediary spheres between God and mankind. It is the latter sphere that they see, or rather the "spheres" of their protégés. It is here that they make use of this clairvoyance which the human being — who has lost it — has need of for the protection that it affords. It is here also that the Angels display the geniality of synthetic and profound understanding — without parallel — which has merited them, on the part of human beings, with the attribute of "omniscience". They are not omniscient, but the facility with which they orientate themselves in human things and grasp them — at contact with which their dark divine wisdom becomes resplendent — has so impressed human beings who have had the experience of consciously meeting with them that they have been led to consider them as omniscient. It is to this impression that has been gained of Angels that the word "genius" owes its original meaning, namely that of superhuman intelligence.

But — and this is the tragic side of angelic existence — this geniality shows up only when the human being has need of it, when he makes room for the flashing forth of its illumination. The Angel depends on man in his creative activity. If the human being does not ask for it, if he turns away from him, the Angel has no motive for creative activity. He can then fall into a state of consciousness where all his creative geniality remains in potential and does not manifest. It is a state of vegetation or "twilight existence", comparable to sleep from the human point of view. An Angel who has nothing to exist for — this is a tragedy in the spiritual world.

Therefore, dear Unknown Friend, think of your Guardian Angel, think of him when you have problems, questions to resolve, tasks to accomplish, plans to formulate, cares and fears to appease! Think of him as a luminous cloud of maternal love above you, moved by the sole desire to serve you and to be useful to you. Do not allow the scruple to arise in you — however noble it may be — that when you appeal to your Guardian Angel you are allowing an entity to come between you and God who is not God, and that therefore you abandon the aspiration to <u>immediate</u> contact between your soul and God — to the direct and authentic touch of God, without intermediary! For the Guardian Angel will never interpose himself between your soul and God in any way, even to an infinitesimal degree, to impede the occurence of the Song of Songs of your soul and God! He has no other concern than to make these immediate and authentic contacts possible, to render your soul disposed to them — and he withdraws as soon as his Lord and yours draws near to your soul. The Guardian Angel is the friend of the bride at the spiritual marriage of the soul and God. Just as the Friend of the Husband who "prepared the way of the Lord and made his paths straight" was obedient to the law of the Friend of the Husband: - "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John iii, 30), so does the Friend of the Bride, who prepares the way of the Lord and makes his paths straight, obey the same law.

The Guardian Angel withdraws before the approach of One who is greater than he.

There is what is called in Christian Hermeticism the "freeing of the Guardian Angel". The Guardian Angel is freed — often in order to be able to acquit new missions — when the soul

has acquired the disposition of its part of "likeness" in order to experience the Divine more intimately and more immediately, which corresponds to another hierarchical degree. Then it is an Archangel who replaces the freed Guardian Angel. Human beings whose Guardian is an Archangel have not only new experiences of the Divine in their inner life, but also, through this very fact, receive a new and objective vocation. They become representatives of a human group — a nation or a human karmic community — which means to say that from this time onwards their actions will no longer be purely personal but will at the same time have significance and value for those of the human community that they represent.

It was so for DANIEL, who in praying —

> "We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from thy commandments and ordinances . . . Now, therefore, O our God, hearken to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplications, and for the love of the Lord, cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline thy ear and hear! Open thy eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name! . . ."

— was acting not only in his name but also — and above all — in the name of the people of Israel. And it was the Archangel Gabriel who "came to him in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice . . . he came to give him wisdom and understanding" (Daniel ix).

Here we have an example of the freeing of the Guardian Angel and of the assumption of his responsibility by an Archangel — in this case the Archangel Gabriel.

It also happens sometimes that the Archangel is freed as well. Then it is an entity from the hierarchy of Powers or Elohim which replaces the Archangel. The human being then becomes a representative of the future of humanity. He lives in the present what mankind someday is due to experience in future centuries.

It is thus that Moses, Elijah and David, for example, were under the protection of the wings of an Elohim — and not only their words but also their lives themselves were prophetic.

But one could make the objection that it is God himself who was revealed and spoke to Moses, Elijah and David, and not an entity of the hierarchy of Powers or Elohim. There is reason to reply to this objection that just as there were human prophets through whose mouths the Holy Spirit spoke, so also there were hierarchical entities through whom the Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father spoke and acted. Thus the three Angels who appeared to Abraham in the heat of the day (Genesis xviii) spoke and acted as the Holy Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Trinity who spoke — through them — to Abraham.

Similarly, Jahve-Elohim was the "bearer" or "representative" of God — of his word and his power — in the accomplishment of the mission with which he was charged by the Holy Trinity, namely that of preparation for the Incarnation of Christ.

In so far as he was an authorized agent representing God, Jahve-Elohim brought the providential design of the Incarnation to realization; in so far as he was an Elohim or Power, he acted as guardian entity of Moses, Elijah and David.

Lastly, a Guardian Elohim — and there are many of them — can also be freed. Then it is an entity of the first hierarchy, a Seraphim, who replaces him. It was so for St. Francis of Assisi. The Seraphim who gave him the teaching of the Crucifixion whereby he gained the stigmata — the Seraphim in the vision of St. Francis — was his Guardian. This is why St. Francis represents more than mankind; what he represents is divinized humanity — this is the God-Man, Jesus-Christ himself.

Stigmata are not always visible. There are stigmata, so to say, "turned outside", and there are stigmata "turned within" — but all those who are under the guardianship of a Seraphim bear the stigmata, visible or invisible. For they represent the Christ.

With respect to stigmata, this subject has been treated from a practical point of view in the fifth Letter on the Arcanum "The Pope". It is not fitting to treat it theoretically. Respect forbids me.

The following is what Saint John of the Cross said concerning the stigmata of Saint Francis:

"It will happen that while the soul is inflamed with the love of God . . ., it will feel that a Seraphim is assailing it by means of an arrow or dart which is all afire with love. And the Seraphim pierces and cauterizes this soul, which, like a red-hot coal, or better a flame, is already enkindled. And then in this cauterization, when the soul is transpierced with that dart, the flame gushes forth, vehemently and with a sudden ascent . . . And being wounded by this fiery dart, the soul feels the wound with unsurpassable delight . . .

God sometimes permits an effect to extend to the bodily senses in the fashion in which it existed interiorly, the wound and the sore (then) appears outwardly, as happened when the Seraphim wounded St. Francis. When the soul is wounded with love by the five wounds, the effect extends to the body and these wounds are impressed on the body and it is wounded, just as the soul is wounded with love. God does not usually bestow a favor upon the body without bestowing it first and principally upon the soul." (St. John of the Cross, "The Living Flame of Love" ii, 9, 11; trsl. K. Kavenaugh and O. Rodriquez, "The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross, London, 1966, pp. 598-599)

You see therefore, dear Unknown Friend, how it is with regard to the Guardian Angel and the union of the soul with God. There is no reason to fear that the least hindrance to this union can ever arise on the part of the entities who are spiritual guardians of the human soul. On the contrary, rather, it is they who make it at all possible — and even beyond the possible — for the soul to be united with God in complete intimacy and with perfect authenticity and freedom. The Friend of the Wife only leads the Wife to the Husband — then she withdraws. Her joy is that of herself diminishing and of seeing that of the Wife increase.

The Card of the fourteenth Arcanum represents a winged female. What do the wings that she has — and the wings of hierarchical entities in general — signify?

Tentacles, paws, arms, wings — are they not simply diverse forms manifesting a common prototype or principle? They are in so far as they express the desire to bear the sense of touch further, to be able to touch things more removed than those in the immediate neighborhood of the surface of the body. They are active extensions of the passive and receptive sense of touch which is spread out over the surface of the organism. In making use of them, the sense of touch makes "excursions" from its usual orbit circumscribed by the skin which covers the body.

The organs of action are simply crystallized will. I walk not because I have legs but rather, on the contrary, I have legs because I have the will to move about. I touch, I take and I give not because I have arms, but I have arms because I have the will to touch, to take and to give.

The "what" of the will engenders the "how" of the action (the organ), and not inversely.

The arms are therefore the expression of the will to bear touch further than the surface of one's own body. They are the manifestation of extended touch, due to the will to touch things at a distance.

It is similar with wings. They are also an exteriorized will — a will become organ. This is the will to go out from the usual orbit not only in the horizontal but also in the vertical, not only to bear touch forward, but also to bear it above.

Wings express the will for movement according to a c r o s s, i.e. not only that of expansion on a plane but also that of elevation to another plane.

All this is related to the whole corporeal organism, i.e. the etheric and astral bodies as well as the physical body. Therefore there are physical wings (as with birds), etheric wings and astral wings. The wings of the subtle bodies (the vital body and the soul body) — like the physical wings of birds with regard to the air — are organs of active contact with the "air", i.e. with the substance and currents of the spiritual world. Just as the bird, whose body is solid and liquid, elevates itself by means of wings from the solid and liquid regions into that of the air, so does the Angel elevate itself by means of currents of vital and psychic energy — which correspond to wings — into the spiritual world higher than vital and astral elements.

Here the analogy stops. For there is also an essential difference between the functioning of the physical wings of a bird, and the operation of the wings — currents of vital and psychic forces — of an Angel. It is as follows.

The bird, in flying, supports itself on the air in order to overcome terrestrial gravitation. Its flying results from its effort — it beats the air with its wings — directed against terrestrial gravitation.

However, it is the opposite for an Angel. Its "flying" is not a mechanical operation of "sculling in the air", as is the case with a bird, but it is a magical operation of the establishing of contact with "celestial gravitation", i.e. with divine attraction. He does not use his wings against terrestrial gravitation, but rather he employs them in order to put himself in contact with "celestial gravitation". It is the touch of divine love that the Angel seeks and finds by means of his wings, and which raises him in ecstasy to a higher sphere.

One could thus say in a concise way: the bird flies by beating its wings against the air, by resting on the air; the Angel "flies" by immobilizing its wings after having touched God. The bird flies thanks to the air; the Angel "flies" thanks to God.

In other words: the Angel's wings constitute semi-organic links with God.

Links — for there are two: one wing holds him in contact with divine understanding, and the other with divine memory or imagination. The two wings are therefore related to the contemplative and creative aspects of God which, in their turn, correspond to the divine image and likeness in man of which Genesis speaks. For the image is the analogous structural relationship of the kernel of the human being — his higher Self or, according to LEIBNITZ, his "Monad" — with God at rest, whilst the likeness is the analogous functional relationship of the human being, i.e. his three powers — understanding, imagination and will — with God in action.

Now, the two angelic wings are the Angel's links with the eternal Sabbath and the eternal Creativity of God or, in other words, — with divine Gnosis and divine Magic. It

is by means of the "gnostic" (or "left") wing that the Angel is in contemplation of divine Wisdom, and it is by means of the "magical" (or "right") wing that he is active in his capacity as messenger or "angel".

This is the principle of polarity underlying the duality of the wings. The principle remains valid also for Angels — and for entities from other spiritual hierarchies — who have more than two wings (sixteen, for example). It will be the task of a future science of "angelology" to grasp the reason or reasons for the plurality of wings of certain angelic entities. This future science will develop — as there is reason to hope — within the heart of mystical theology, the first layer of which was given by St. DIONYSIUS the Areopagite, or "pseudo-DIONYSIUS", as the learned take pleasure in designating the founder of mystical theology. With respect to us, we have to restrict ourselves to a general explanation of the two wings of Angels, in reminding ourselves that it is a matter here of a meditation on the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, whose Card represents an entity with two wings — which constitutes, consequently, the problem which occupies us here.

From tradition we know that there are also human beings endowed with wings. Thus the right panel of a triptych forming the circle of a deesis, a Russian icon from the hand of Nicephorus Savine, shows St. John the Baptist as winged (beginning of the XVII th century, school of Stroganoff, at present in Tretiakoff Gallery, Moscow; cf. T. Talbot Rice, "Icons — Ikonen — Icones", London, 1959, plate 63). Similarly, in place of the Hermit of the Marseille Tarot, the Bologna Tarot shows a winged patriarch, who walks laboriously, bent double on two crutches, having a pillar behind him (cf. Oswald WIRTH, "Le Tarot des imagiers du Moyen Age", Paris, 1927, p.145). This is not Saturn as Oswald Wirth interprets this Card of the Bologna Tarot, but rather the Hermit, i.e. the very essence of the way of practical Hermeticism. For the winged old man before a pillar, supporting himself on two crutches has nothing — iconographically — to do with Saturn, save for the advanced age, whilst the context (the pillar, wings, and crutches) of the Card portray all that is essential, both as fulfillment and as trial, of the spiritual way of Hermeticism. To become a pillar is the aim of the Hermit or hermeticist; the means of raising oneself as a pillar are wings; and what becomes more and more difficult for one who becomes a pillar is horizontal movement. The contemplation which is established as a more and more permanent state in the soul, by means of wings, renders horizontal movement more and more difficult — the powers of the soul (understanding, imagination and will) being immersed in contemplation. The Hermit of the Bologna Tarot is therefore a hermeticist (and iconographically the patriarch represents Hermes Trismegistus rather than Saturn, the oriental covering of his head and his dress being traditionally those of the "aged Hermes Trismegistus"), who lives in the vertical, immobilized; he has become a "spiritual stylite" at the expense of movement in the horizontal.

Here it is not a matter of ancient mythology, but rather of the Arcanum of the practical and spiritual way of Hermeticism.

The astral and etheric wings of a human being signify a more-or-less advanced degree of recovery of the divine likeness in him. For certainly it was the lot of man before the original sin to have wings. He lost them subsequently.

How are they recovered?

"Wings" are organs of the subtle bodies — astral and vital — and not any kind of activities of the conscious self. It is therefore a matter of the domain of the unconscious when it is a question of wings. It is a matter of the task of rendering spiritual endeavors turned towards God, such as prayer and meditation, semi-organic, i.e. to transform conscious acts of the self into psycho-vital currents of the subtle bodies.

The apostolic counsel:- "Pray constantly" (I Thessalonians v,17) is the key here. It is impossible to pray unceasingly in full consciousness, but it is certainly possible to carry over prayer from consciousness into the unconscious, where it can operate unceasingly. The astral and vital bodies can pray unceasingly — which is not possible for the conscious self. The latter can certainly, through its initiative, establish a current of unceasing prayer in consciousness at first, then carry it over into the psychic unconscious (astral body) and into the vital unconscious (etheric body). Yes, it can even carry it as far as the physical body, as is evident from the "sincere accounts of a pilgrim to his spiritual father" (otkrovennye rasskazy strannika dukhovnymu svoimu ottsu) — a Russian book from an anonymous author of the past century on the practical training of the school of unceasing prayer. I have seen translations of this book in English, German, Dutch and French (English translation: "The Way of a Pilgrim"; trsl. R.M. French, London, 1954). It is described how the pilgrim — who is the author of the book — in waking up during the night, hears his heart beating distinctly the words of the prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ — Son of God — have mercy on me — a sinner" (Gospodi Iisuse Khriste — Syne Bozhiy — pomiluy mya greshnego).

Now, it is "unceasing prayer", established in the psychic and vital bodies, which forms the currents directed above in these bodies, and which can lead to the formation of wings. I say "can", because the formation of wings demands something still further, namely a current from above which moves to meet that from below. Wings are formed only when the two currents — that of human endeavor and that of grace — meet and unite. The "Devil" of the XVth Arcanum of the Tarot also has wings. But his wings consist only of energy engendered from below. They are deprived of grace from above. Angelic wings, on the contrary, are due to the union of effort and grace, just as are those of the divine likeness to-be-recovered in man. It is divine Grace which plays the decisive role. In the last analysis, wings are a gift of divine grace.

Pure humanism can create only the wings of Icarus. And the lot of Icarus is known: his wings of "wax" melted in the warmth of the sun, and the unfortunate Icarus fell to the earth. Regarding demonism, it can develop only the wings of a bat, i.e. those of darkness which are organs by means of which one can plunge into the depths of darkness.

The presence of authentic and legitimate wings in the human subconsciousness (i.e. the psychic and vital bodies) is not without effect on the consciousness of the human being. It manifests itself above all, and in general, as a constant orientation of consciousness towards God. Then man always has the feeling of the presence of God and the spiritual worlds and nothing can take this feeling away from him or suffocate it in him.

This feeling (that the Bible designates as "walking with God" or "walking before the face of God") crystallizes itself into two unshakeable convictions: that one can endure all for God and that one can accomplish everything with God. Martyrdom and thaumaturgy are the two pillars on which Faith rests and through which it conquered the old world. Now, it is the "gnostic wing" which disposes consciousness towards martyrdom and it is the "magical wing"

which disposes it towards thaumaturgy. A winged human being is therefore disposed towards the heroic and towards the miraculous.

This is the essential of the problem of wings. They are the opposite of legs, because they are organs of contact with Heaven, whilst legs are those of contact with the earth. The former put us in relationship with "celestial gravitation"; the latter put us in relationship with terrestrial gravitation.

With respect to arms — and the Angel of the Card of the XIVth Arcanum has arms — they are related to the horizontal, i.e. to the fields of mutual attraction of beings who meet one another. If the law of wings is the law of God, that of arms is the love of neighbor. And the law of legs is the love of terrestrial Nature.

The Angel of the Card holds two vases united by a current of water.

Thus we find ourselves right in the problem of fluids.

The problem of fluids is that of the dynamic functioning of the whole human being, i.e. corporeal, psychic and spiritual. In reality, it amounts to that of life — understood as a comprehensive spiritual, psychic and corporeal process. For just as there exists a system of physical circulation, so also there exists a system of vital and astral circulation, which in its turn is simply a reflection of the system of circulation comprising spirit, soul and body — the threefold body — as a living unity. The principle underlying this total system of circulation is the divine likeness. And as it is this which has undergone the disfiguring effect of original sin, it is the mission of the Guardian Angel to see to it that the total system of circulation functions in as healthy a way as possible. The Guardian Angel therefore watches over the functioning of the system of spiritual-psychic-corporeal circulation, i.e. the health and the life of the whole human being. This is why the Card of the XIVth Arcanum represents him to us as engaged in the accomplishing of his office of regulating the system of circulation, or the human being's fluidic system. The system in question comprises several active centers — the "lotuses", the nerve centers, the glands, to name only the principal ones — but the harmonious functioning of all these centers depends on a single thing, a single action which takes place at the key position: this is the current which constitutes the relationship between the image and the likeness in man. The monad (the image) should not exist for nothing nor should it inundate the system of circulation (the likeness). In the first case, the human being would be deprived of the stimulation to live a truly human life, that is to say he would not be orientated towards the aim of human existence. In the latter case, the human being would be shattered by the additional impulse coming from the monad (the image) — which would be an irreparable catastrophe. Now, it is a just measure in the relationship between the image and the likeness which has to be guarded and which is, in fact, guarded by the guardian Angel.

This is why tradition has given the name "Temperance" to the XIVth Arcanum of the Tarot. For it is a matter here of the measure in the fluidic relationship between the image and the likeness which is necessary for life and health.

Just measure in the fluidic relationship between the absolute radicalism of the Monad (the image) and the relativism of the phenomenal Personality (the likeness) constitutes the fundamental principle of spiritual, psychic and corporeal health. This measure amounts to an always-changing equilibrium between Eternity and the Moment, between the Absolute and the Relative, between Contemplation and Action, between the Ideal and the Phenomenal. Many relevant things can be said concerning the polarity of Mary and Martha — and have indeed been said —

but we, all of us, live a healthy life only in as much as the two sisters in us are present and active as sisters, i.e. that they collaborate, having in view the Third.

No one can dispense with the Mary in himself – nor, equally, with the Martha in himself – and remain healthy in spirit, soul and body. "Ora et labora" cannot be replaced by any other formula. For one cannot live either without contemplation or without action. This is what Krishna made Arjuna understand in the Bhagavad-Gita: "... performing all actions, always depending on Me, he (man), through My favor, obtains the imperishable and eternal seat" (Bhagavad-Gita xviii, 56; trsl. K.T. Telang, "Sacred Books of the East" viii, Oxford, 1882, p.128).

And, equally, this is what St. Bernard showed to advantage through his monastic reform, where contemplation and work were united, as also through his affirmation of Christian Chivalry in his sermon on the second Crusade and in the Rules that he gave to the Templar Order. Nowadays many criticize the Saint for his intervention sanctioning and encouraging the Crusade, but what he did was simply to make an appeal to "Christian Arjunas" on the new field of Kurukshetra, where the two armies of Islam and Christianity had already been assembled for a battle without mercy some centuries before him. The battle had commenced in the seventh century of our era, when the Arabs invaded the eastern Christian countries. Charles Martel repulsed them at Poitiers in France, and through this victory (in 732) saved Christian civilization and the West from Mohammedan conquest. Should one have been content with having saved the kernel of the West and have taken only a defensive attitude – in the manner of the Byzantine empire, which subsequently, little by little, became entirely conquered by the Mohammedans? The great battle of the twelfth century was still not achieved; it was always in process. Can one demand of St. Bernard that he should have preached the necessity of abandoning the Holy Land to the Mohammedans and of beginning a "peaceful co-existence", at the expense of the country where the cradle of Christianity is to be found?

Be that as it may concerning the crusades, St. Bernard advanced not only active contemplation for the monks but also contemplative activity for the knights – just as Krishna did more than fifteen centuries before him. The one and the other did so because they knew that man is at one and the same time a contemplative and an active being, that "faith without works is death" – and that, equally, works without faith are death.

All this as theory is as clear as the day. But with respect to practice, it is not thus so. Practice entails an arcanum – an intimate "savoir-faire" – which is the fourteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot, "Temperance".

Temperance, as a spiritual exercise, signifies the task of knowing the relationship between the image or Monad, the likeness or phenomenal personality, and the guardian Angel or individual grace. This means to say that one should find the source, current and direction of inner life – in grasping its nature and role – and work and live in conformity with this knowledge.

Firstly, the relationship between image and likeness: What is the intimate experience of this, and how does it reveal itself?

The following is a straightforward answer:

The contact established between image and likeness is experienced as inner weeping. Weeping is the reality of the fact that the two sisters – the image and the likeness – touch. The usual experience rendered by the expression: "I am moved to tears" is only a reflection of what happens when image and likeness touch. They then mingle their tears – and the inner current which results from this is the life of the human soul.

Tears, sweat and blood are the three substances of the threefold mystical-gnostic-magical Mystery of man. To be touched from above is "tears"; the effort to conform to that which is above is "sweat"; and the consummated marriage of grace from above and effort from below is "blood". Tears announce the engagement of the Eternal and the Temporal; sweat is the trial that this entails; and blood is the region where the wedding of Eternity and the Moment is celebrated and where their marriage is consummated.

The Mystery — therefore more than an Arcanum — is whole and indivisible: tears, sweat and blood. But certain people seek and would grasp the Mystery only in tears. Others hope to find it only in sweat. Still others have a presentiment that, beyond all inner experiences and endeavors, the alliance exists through the blood and in the blood, and they do not want to know or recognize the other two aspects of the Mystery.

Here we have the inner reasons for the three principal heresies (for every serious heresy is a truth over-accentuated at the expense of the whole truth, i.e. at the expense of the living organism of truth). For those who seek only tears are inclined to quietism or illuminism; those who prefer sweat, i.e. effort of will, easily fall into the Pelagian heresy of denying grace; and those who seek the Mystery only in the blood often arrive at the Lutheran heresy where work, i.e. effort, counts for nothing.

But the Mystery, I repeat, is whole and indivisible: tears, sweat and blood — engagement, trial and wedding — faith, hope and love.

Concerning tears, this is what flows between the two vases — that of the image and that of the likeness — which are held by the Guardian Angel of the Card of the XIVth Arcanum of the Tarot.

The XIVth Arcanum therefore teaches the spiritual exercise dedicated to the mystery of tears. —

"Tears" — like "sweat" and "blood" — signify, both as an expression and as a fluidic substance, more than the physical body-fluid secreted by glands in the eyes. They signify also the subtle fluid of a spiritual and psychic nature which emanates from the heart, i.e. the "twelve-petalled lotus" of man's super-physical organization. The expression "to have tears in one's voice" already points to inner tears, and the expression "to lament one's weaknesses" goes further in the same direction.

The fact that there are tears of sorrow, joy, admiration, compassion, tenderness, etc., signifies that tears are produced by the intensity of the inner life. They flow — whether inwardly or outwardly is not important — when the soul, moved by the spirit or by the outer world, experiences a higher degree of intensity in its inner life than is customary.

The soul who cries is therefore more living, and therefore fresher and younger than when it does not cry.

The "gift of tears" was always considered by the masters of Christian spirituality as a grace from the Holy Spirit, for it is thanks to this gift that the soul surpasses itself and ascends to a degree of intensity of life which is certainly above that to which it is accustomed.

Now, the "gift of tears" is a comparatively recent spiritual phenomenon in the history of human spirituality. In the ancient world one wept only ritually, i.e. through verbal lamentations and through prescribed gestures of mourning or grief, and it was amongst the chosen people, Israel, that real weeping began. It was as a manifestation of the share that the chosen people had in the mission of preparing for the coming of Christ — who wept at the time of Lazarus' resuscitation and who sweated sweat and blood the night in the Garden of Olives — that real

weeping came to have its rudimentary origin from the womb of this people. And to the present day the Jews preserve, cultivate and respect the "gift of tears". In fact, every revelation in the narrative of the Zohar is preceded or accompanied by the weeping of the one who had it and who comes to share it with the others. And it was the same with the tsaddikim (righteous ones) of the Hassidim of eastern Europe even twenty years ago.

And the weeping wall of Jerusalem...

Therefore we owe to this people not only the Bible, not only Christ in the Flesh, and not only the work of the apostles, but also the gift of tears — warm and sincere — which is the vivifying fluid that emanates from contact between the image and the likeness in us. Antisemitism... my God, ought not elementary gratitude suffice to grant the place of honor at the table of European culture to the Jews — or rather to humbly ask them to accept it — since this place is due to them by human and divine right? "Honor thy father and thy mother," says the divine commandment. And provided that we are not illegitimate children or foundlings, who are our spiritual parents — whom we are bound to honor — if not the Jews? — But I believe that in writing these things I am acting like a man who wants to force an open door. For I cannot imagine that your sentiments, dear Unknown Friend, are not identical to mine in this matter.

Above I said that the personages of the Zohar cry when they grasp a profound spiritual truth. The following is what there is to say on this subject from the point of view of Christian Hermeticism.

There are three principal modes of authentic spiritual experience: <u>vision</u>, <u>inspiration</u> and <u>intuition</u>, or <u>perception</u> of spiritual <u>phenomena</u>, spiritual <u>communication</u> and spiritual <u>identification</u>. Vision presents and shows us spiritual things, inspiration infuses us with understanding of them, and intuition reveals to us their essence by way of assimilation with our essence. Thus St. PAUL had the <u>vision</u> of Christ on the way to Damascus, from whom he received <u>communications</u> that he obeyed and the carrying out of which constituted his apostolic work — including his journeys — and when he said: "I live, but it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians ii,20), this was knowledge through identification or <u>intuition</u>.

Now, vision augments experience; inspiration augments knowledge just as it does understanding; and intuition is the metamorphosis and growth no longer of what one experiences and understands, but rather of what one <u>is</u>. Through intuition one <u>becomes</u> another, through inspiration one apprehends new ways of thinking, feeling and acting, and through vision one's domain of experience is enlarged — one has a revelation of new facts inaccessible to the senses and to intellectual invention.

In practice it is not so that vision, inspiration and intuition are successive stages following the order — vision, inspiration, intuition. For there are those on the spiritual path who have only the experience of intuition, and still others who are only inspired, without ever having visions. But whatever the kind of mode of spiritual experience may be, at the final count it is always a matter of <u>becoming</u>, i.e. intuition. Thus one can say that <u>in principle</u> vision and inspiration are only means for arriving at intuition. Now, intuition takes place in the <u>blood</u>, inspiration in <u>tears</u>, and vision — in <u>sweat</u>. For an authentic vision always entails an increase of effort in order to <u>bear</u> it, in order to remain upright in the face of it. Vision has a weight, sometimes overwhelming, which demands a great effort on the part of the soul in order not to give way under the weight of the vision.

Authentic inspiration always entails an inner upheaval. It pierces the soul like an arrow in wounding it and in making it experience that profound emotion which is a synthesis of sorrow and joy. The symbol of the Rose-Cross — a cross from the center of which a rose blossoms out — renders the essence of the experience of inspiration in the best way that I know. The Rose-Cross expresses the mystery of tears, i.e. that of inspiration, with force and clarity. It portrays the joy of sorrow and the sorrow of joy, which together comprise inspiration.

With respect to intuition, it is no longer a matter either of the weight of riches or of the romance of the engagement of the Rose and the Cross, but rather of consummating the marriage of Life and Death. What lives, thereby dies; and what dies, is thereby re-born. Thereby blood is mingled with the Blood and is transformed alchemically from the "fluid of separation" into the "fluid of union".

There are three ways of "seeing" the Cross: the Crucifix, the Rose-Cross, and the gilded cross bearing a rose of silver.

The Crucifix is the greatest treasure of vision: it is the vision of divine and human love.

The black cross with a rose blossoming from it is the treasure of inspiration: this is divine and human love speaking in the soul.

The gilded cross bearing a rose of silver is the treasure of intuition: this is love transforming the soul.

But the Mystery of the Cross is one and indivisible: whoever does not worship the Crucifix cannot be inspired by it to the point of accepting it (which is inspiration) and still less can he identify himself with it (which is intuition). It is a matter of a single cross — a single indivisible Christian Mystery. Therefore someone would certainly be in error if, instead of seeing in the Crucifix the way, the truth and the life, he were to think of founding, for example, a community or fraternity "of the Resurrection" with the gilded cross and rose of silver as its symbol, replacing the universal symbol of Christianity — the Crucifix. He would be in error, I say, because the two rose-crosses in no way replace the Crucifix, but are included and implied in it. It is the cross of the Crucifix which becomes inspirative (the rose-cross) and which is transformed into solar light (the gilded cross) bearing the receptive soul (the rose of silver). Resurrection is only crucifixion having reached the stage of fructification. It is realized crucifixion.

Therefore one should not — one cannot — separate from one another the mortal sweat of the Crucifix, the inspirative tears of acceptance of the Cross (Rose-Cross), and the blood transmuted through identification with the Cross (the gilded Cross bearing the rose of silver). The mystery of Sweat, Tears and Blood is one and indivisible.

It is the same with Christianity. It is one and indivisible. One should not — one cannot — separate from so-called "exoteric" Christianity its gnosis and mysticism, or so-called "esoteric" Christianity. Esoteric Christianity is entirely within exoteric Christianity; it does not exist — and cannot exist — separately from it. Christian Hermeticism is only a special vocation within the universal Christian community — the vocation specific to the dimension of depth. Just as there are in the universal Church vocations to the priesthood, monastic life, religious knighthood, etc., so there is a vocation — as irresistable and irrevocable as the others — to Hermeticism. This is a vocation to a life lived in consciousness of the unity of Cult (or Christian sacred magic), Revelation (or Christian sacred gnosis) and Salvation (or Christian

sacred mysticism), just as the unity of the whole of mankind's authentic spiritual life throughout its entire history always was, is, and always will be Christocentric. Hermeticism is the vocation to live the universal and eternal truth of the prologue to St. John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the

> Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made through him and nothing that has been made was made without him. In him was the life, and the life was the light of men... This was the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world"...

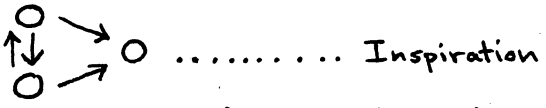
Now, unity of the light in the whole past, in the present, and in the whole future; unity of the light in the East, West, North and South; unity of the light in Magic, Gnosis and Mysticism; unity of the light, lastly, in Cult, Revelation and Salvation — this is the hermetic vocation which is, I repeat, as irresistible and irrevocable as that of priest, monk or religious knight.

I may add that it is to you who are irresistibly and irrevocably called to Hermeticism that I address these letters and that it is you whom I call "Dear Unknown Friends". I acknowledge that I have also Known Friends. But with respect to these latter, they are for the most part to be found in the spiritual world. All the more do I address myself to them in these letters. And how many times, in writing these letters, I have felt the fraternal embraces of these Friends, including here Papus, Guaita, Péladan, Eliphas Lévi and Claude de Saint-Martin!

Friends, Friends here and there, the Mystery is one and indivisible — sealed by Sweat, Tears and Blood! You, Friends who are there, now you know that there is only one truth, one light, one Christ, one community — and that there is neither separate exotericism and esotericism nor separate exoteric and esoteric communities! May the Friends who are here know this also!

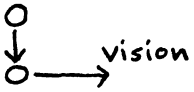
Tears are the element proper to inspiration. And he who is moved to weep — inwardly or outwardly is not important — before a Crucifix is already inspired by it. He then contemplates the Rose-Cross in the Crucifix. And he who fixes his eyes on the Crucifix at the supreme moment of agony, where his blood begins to chill, he — in drawing from it a new warmth to replace the warmth which is leaving him — lives intuition. He already contemplates the gilded Cross bearing the rose of silver...

Inspiration is the principle acting in tears. Just like weeping, inspiration takes place in the guise of "flowing between two vases". In inspiration, whatever its true source of origin may be, a flow is active, which is produced between the higher Self or Image and the lower self or Likeness. Here there is a flow which results from the simultaneous collaboration of the "higher eye" (or "ear") and the "lower eye" (or "lower ear").



This means to say that higher understanding and lower understanding, being in contact, vibrate in unison, each with its own voice and in terms of its own language, and thus together produce a concrete inspiration.

The "technique" of vision differs from that of inspiration in that in vision it is not a matter of the simultaneous collaboration of two "eyes" (or "ears") — higher and lower, but rather of the passive imprint that the lower self, alone, receives from above. As it is not a matter of the collaboration of two "understandings", it can be that the lower self (the personality) experiences a vision without understanding it. It can, therefore, remain incomprehensible for a long time.



Concerning intuition, this is due, likewise to a single active principle. Here the lower self identifies itself with the higher Self, i.e. it raises itself to the latter and effaces itself (in the higher Self) to the point of becoming a passive and mute presence. And then it is the higher Self alone which is active. Intuition

These three schematic representations represent at the same time the arcana of Tears, Sweat and Blood. In intuition, where the lower self experiences a kind of death, which is transformed into Life in the higher Self, the mystery of Blood, symbolized by the gilded cross with the rose of silver, is accomplished.

In vision, where the weight of revelation from above falls on the lower self and must be supported by it, it is a matter of the mystery of Sweat, symbolized by the Cross of the Crucifix — the cross that the Crucified One had to carry to Calvary, under the weight of which he fell three times.

And in inspiration, where the unblemished Image and the fallen Likeness unite to give birth to a new word, it is a matter of the mystery of Tears, symbolized by the rose-cross.

It is the mystery of Tears and of inspiration that the XIVth Arcanum of the Tarot aims at in particular. It is the spiritual exercise dedicated to inspiration.

Inspiration, as follows from the whole of the preceding and as is evident from all authentic experience of it, is not something which simply happens, as in the case of vision. Nor is it something which results from the sum total of all efforts at self-sacrifice, mortification, and the reduction of oneself to nothing, as is the case with intuition. Rather, it is a co-activity, the concerted activity of the higher Self and the lower self. It is essentially the flow emanating from two vases at once.

The practical arcanum of inspiration is therefore the knowledge of how to be active and passive at the same time. Active — in what concerns the question or demand; passive — in what concerns the answer or solution.

It would be false simply to formulate inwardly a question and subsequently assume a passive, though calm and silent, attitude of waiting for an answer through inspiration. One can thus certainly listen and wait for a long time: as a rule, nothing happens.

It would be equally false to make a great effort at discursive thought and "divining" imagination so as to force inspiration as if it were a "salary for work done".

No, it is neither passivity in waiting nor, equally, activity of thought and imagination which realizes the state of soul appropriate for inspiration; it is a matter of simultaneous activity and passivity.

Let us try to explain.

The rationalism of the XVIIIth century advanced the formula: what is clear, is true. To which is added the corollary: what is not clear, is not true.

Now, we have inherited these two formulas, consciously or unconsciously, from a century when thinking "modo geometrico" ("in a geometrical mode") was the ideal. Certainly we no longer believe that everything which is clear is true, but all the same we postulate that what is true should at the same time be clear. We demand that truth must entail clarity.

Guided by this principle we endeavor to be precise, i.e. to delineate clear lines around the subject which occupies us. But in so doing we effect an intellectual enclosure — which is clear, yes, but it is separated by the enclosure from the great flood of truth, of which we

have taken possession of only a drop. The drop is clear, but it is only a drop taken from the flood, i.e. from the great context of Truth.

Having understood this, we can be prompted to think in another way. We can try to think with the flood, i.e. no longer to think alone, but rather together with the anonymous "choir" of thinkers above, below, yesterday and tomorrow. "I think" then gives way to "it thinks".

This "thinking together" is active and passive at the same time. It is active in so far as you are thinking, and it is passive in so far as "something" thinks with you. There are two vases from which thought flows — yours and also another. And this is precisely the state of soul that is necessary in order to have inspirations. The arcanum of inspiration, the XIVth Arcanum of the Tarot, is that of two sources and two simultaneous currents of thought, which mingle, unite, and constitute authentic inspiration.

I have described above the process of "thinking together" — or that of inspiration — wholly as a kind of special technique. I had to do so for the sake of clarity. But clarity and truth are not identical. I must therefore correct what I had to sacrifice of the truth in favor of clarity. What follows is the correction.

There is, truth to tell, no technique in the intimate and spiritual domain of inspiration — just as no technique exists in the domains of vision and intuition. In these domains everything is essentially moral. For in order to "think together", one thing before everything else is required — and this is humility. In thinking, in order to "think together", I have to bow before an intelligence surpassing mine, and to do so not in general terms and in an abstract way but, rather, concretely — by yielding the "author's exclusive rights" to the anonymous co-thinker. "Thinking together" means to say thinking on one's knees, i.e. humbling oneself before the Other, diminishing oneself so that He may increase. This is thought-prayer or prayer-thought.

Neither the concentration exercises of raja-yoga nor the breathing (and other) exercises of hatha-yoga will render us inspired. It is humility alone, due to poverty, obedience and chastity — the three universal and eternal vows — which renders us inspirable.

It cannot be helped, the spiritual world is essentially moral. And inspiration is the fruit of humility in effort and of effort with humility. "Ora et labora" is therefore the key to the door of inspiration, as it is the key to many other doors besides.

What I have said concerning humility as the preliminary condition for inspiration calls for, in its turn, a further detail, if not a correction. For humility can sometimes prove not only sterile with respect to inspiration but can even be an obstacle put in its way. Thus, it is humility which paralyzes the aspiration to knowledge of the truth and to perfection in the exercise of virtues and capabilities. Someone who humbly says:

"I am not occupied with divine things and with the spiritual world, because for that one has to be a saint and a sage, and I am neither one nor the other".-- will not receive inspiration. Preoccupation with the soul's salvation alone can certainly advance the soul quite far on the path of purity and innocence, but it can at the same time leave it in complete ignorance with respect to the world, history, and problems of mankind's spiritual life. Many an authentic saint did not know much concerning the world and its history, on account of the humility which protected him from going out from the circle of what is strictly necessary for salvation.

Hunger and thirst for the truth — which comprises God, the world and mankind — nevertheless underlie the inspiration which falls under the law of "Ora et labora". The

hermeticist, also, will not be inspired if he is not humble. But no more will he be inspired if he does not apprehend, in the aspiration to the truth, the art of forgetting himself. Whatever he may be — humble or presumptuous, innocent or sinful — he must be driven by hunger and thirst for the truth concerning God, the world and mankind.

One should know how to ask and one should dare to ask, whilst forgetting one's humility and one's presumption. Children know how to ask and dare to ask. Are they presumptuous? No, because each question that they pose is at the same time an avowal of their ignorance. Are they humble, therefore? They are in so far as they know and sense their ignorance, and they are not in so far as they are driven by hunger and thirst to know and understand to the point of forgetting themselves — including all humility and all presumption in them. In this the hermeticist imitates the child. He wants to know "who", "what", "how" and "why", concerning life and death, good and evil, creation and evolution, history and the human soul... People in the natural sciences whose hair is grey through study and research have abandoned these questions — "childish questions", they say. They resign themselves to a single question: that of the technical "how". The "why" and the "what", not to speak of the "who", are pre-scientific questions which they leave to theology and the belles-lettres...

Still, we hermeticists have conserved the whole repertoire of questions from our childhood — the "what" and the "how", the "why" and even the "who".

Are we backward? Have we progressed beyond others? Backward or progressive — it does not matter — we have kept living the hunger and thirst for knowledge and understanding from our childhood and it is this which leads us to ask things that mature people of contemporary civilization no longer ask.

What? Have we not learned from the history of civilization that these questions are unknowable, that the "ignoramus" ("we do not know") of today was preceded by the heroic effort of innumerable generations aspiring to answer these questions, and that it was after this unfruitful effort that one resigned oneself to the "ignoramus" ("we do not know")? What chance, therefore, what hope remains for us after all this?

Our chance, our hope — is inspiration. And it is precisely because we ask in the way that children do that we have the hope — no, the certainty — that our Father who is in heaven will give us the answer, that he will not give us a stone instead of bread, or a serpent in place of a fish. Inspiration — the two vases from whence flows the living water held by a winged Angel — is the hope and the chance for the survival of Hermeticism in the centuries to come!

Dear Unknown Friend, say to yourself that you know nothing, and at the same time say to yourself that you are able to know everything, and — armed with this healthy humility and this healthy presumption of children — immerse yourself in the pure and strengthening element of the "thinking together" of inspiration! May the winged angel be present in this enterprise of yours, and may he hold the two vases from which inspiration will pour!

The arcanum of inspiration is of vital practical importance not only for Hermeticism but also for the spiritual history of mankind in general. For just as in the individual human biography there are decisive moments of inspiration, so there are in mankind's biography — which is history — decisive points where far-reaching inspirations enter into the spiritual life of humanity. The great religions are such inspirations. In ancient India the Rishis had inspiration, which became the source of the Vedas; in ancient Persia the great Zarathustra,

the Golden Star, had inspiration, which became the source of the Zend-Avesta; Moses and the prophets had inspiration, which became the source of the Old Testament in the Bible and the Event of the life, death and resurrection of Christ was followed by the inspiration which was the source of the written Gospels — of which each author is twofold: man and inspiring Cherubim. Lastly, Islam refers to no other source than the inspiration that Mohammed received from the Archangel Gabriel, which became the source of the Koran.

With respect to Buddhism, which is the religion of humanism pure and simple, it also regards as the source of its origin the spiritual event in the soul of Gautama Buddha under the Bodhi tree, where the four sacred truths of Buddhism were revealed in a sudden way, excluding all doubt, i.e. by way of inspiration.

The great religions are therefore the inspirations of mankind. And the history of religion is that of inspiration. Misunderstandings with regard to inspiration and ignorance of its practical arcanum will also have distressing and tragic repercussions in mankind's history. There will be people who will believe that inspiration is obtained through effort, and others who will believe that it is produced only in complete passivity of the soul. Thus all forms of Pelagianism and quietism will arise in the history of religion. All those who do not know that the arcanum of inspiration is that of activity and passivity simultaneously will fall necessarily either into Pelagianism or into quietism.

Individual psychological experiences — including the experience of setbacks and disillusions — in the realm of aspiring to inspiration have played an enormous role in the catastrophic upheavals which have taken place in the history of Christianity.

Thus, an Augustinian monk of the XVIth century ardently desired inspiration. To this end he practiced the rigorous asceticism of fasting, mortification of the flesh, and vigils of prayer. He believed that effort would procure inspiration for him; but... he had none. Then, disillusioned as he was, he advanced the doctrine of the vanity of work, of all effort. Faith alone suffices for salvation.

Here lies the origin of Lutheran Protestantism.

In the same century a doctor of law underwent a sudden conversion, from which he concluded that inspiration is the work of God and God alone, without any participation of human effort and freedom. It is God, and God alone, who has chosen for all eternity those whom he has predestined to salvation amongst the mass predestined for perdition.

Here lies the origin of Calvinist Protestantism.

If Martin Luther and John Calvin had known that inspiration is activity and passivity, or effort and grace simultaneously, the one would not have seen man as only a sinner and the other would not have conceived of God as a cosmic tyrant.

Saint John of the Cross was needed to show that one can pass by the darkness and aridity of the senses and of the mind without drawing back and without despair, just as one can effect a profound reform — in the sense of the practice of the poverty and moral radicalism of the Gospels — without at the same time attacking the unity of the Church. In truth, St. John of the Cross atoned for Martin Luther.

Yet another saint, Ignatius of Loyola, was needed to demonstrate that man can choose God and his cause in the full freedom of love, instead of being chosen by God — and that just as Jacob wrestled until the break of day, saying: I will not let you go, unless you bless

me, so can each free human will, chosen or not, embrace the cause of God voluntarily and will be blessed by God . . . Saint Ignatius of Loyola atoned for John Calvin by living in the voluntary obedience of love for the God of love, instead of the obedience of a poor wretch before the power of the Almighty.

With respect to Christian Hermeticism, it has knowledge of the arcanum of inspiration and it will never range itself on the side of those who believe that inspiration is made, nor on the side of those who believe that it is merited by pure and simple passivity of the soul. Hermeticism knows the law of the "marriage of opposites" and it knows that inspiration is the marriage of activity and passivity in the soul.

Read Louis Claude de Saint-MARTIN and you will nowhere find either Pelagianism or quietism, but rather throughout is the twofold faith — in God and man, in grace and human effort. "Ora et labora" is truly the practical view which is evident in the whole of the work of Saint-Martin. And the mature Eliphas LÉVI? And Josephin PÉLADAN? And the mature PAPUS? — They all professed to the twofold faith — in God and man, in grace and human effort. This amounts to saying that they knew the arcanum of inspiration — the arcanum which is found represented symbolically by the fourteenth card of the Tarot.

I have mentioned some hermeticists whom I suppose that you, dear Unknown Friend, know of. But there are many others who ought to be named as guardians of the ancient tradition of the arcanum of inspiration. But what will the name of Schmakov say to you, for example? Or the name Roudnikova?

These are names which, like the yellow leaves of autumn, repose in forgetfulness beneath the immense white shroud of snow which covers pre-revolutionary Russia.

Be that as it may, there is a community of hermeticists, known and unknown, but the majority of whose members are anonymous. And it is only a small part of this community which is composed of those who know one another and meet one another face to face in the full daylight of the world of the senses. Another part — still less numerous — is composed of those who know each other and meet each other face to face in vision. But it is inspiration which unites all members of the community of hermeticists, without regard as to whether they are near to one another or far apart, whether they know each other or not, or whether they are living or deceased.

Inspiration is, truth to tell, what constitutes the hermetic community. It is inspiration which is the link between its members and within which all its members meet one another. The community of inspiration — this is what in reality the community of hermeticists is.

It is inspiration in common which underlies the mental and symbolic language common to hermeticists — the language of analogy, the marriage of opposites, synthesis, moral logic, the dimension of depth added to those of clarity and breadth of knowledge, and above all the ardent belief that all is knowable and revealable, that the mystery is infinite knowability and revealability . . . .

This common inspiration, this language that we have in common, is the inner Word which guides us and impels us — inwardly and outwardly at the same time — in all our aspirations. The Papus of 1890 did not "know" what Papus would become in 1917, but he already directed his efforts towards what he would know, feel and realize — what he would be,

in a word — in 1917. This was because he knew in 1890 what he did not "know". It was because the inspiration which underlies Christian Hermeticism was present and working in him. And it thanks to this inspiration that he broke with the neo-Buddhist stream of the Theosophical Society and that he preferred the intellectual Christianity of Saint-YVES d'Alveydre to the intellectual Buddhism of the Theosophical Society. And it was again thanks to this inspiration that he preferred the real Christianity of Maître PHILIP of Lyons to the Christian intellectualism of his youth. Yes, the Papus of 1917, praying and working, was the product of the inspiration which guided and impelled the young student of medicine, subsequent enthusiast for Occult Science, subsequent bold magician, and again, subsequently, the lover of great intellectual syntheses....

Here we have a particular example of the gradual realization of inspiration working from the days of youth.

"In the beginning was the Word" — is the law not only of the world but also of the realization of inspiration in each individual biography. And the entire community of Hermeticists lives under this law, under the law of inspiration.

Everyone lives under this law. The community of hermeticists is distinguished from the rest of mankind only in that it is borne — in an irresistible way — to be conscious of it and to know what happens both to them and to the rest of humanity.

The lot of hermeticists differs from that of every human being only in that the former hunger and thirst for comprehensive knowledge of that which the latter simply undergo. Their lot does not bring any privilege with it; on the contrary, rather, it is an added duty with which hermeticists are charged, notably the inner duty to understand the totality of miracles and disasters which is life and the world. This duty makes them appear presumptuous or childish in the eyes of the world, but it is the arcanum of inspiration — the arcanum of the winged entity pouring living water from one vase into another — which renders them such as they are.

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Letter XV : Meditation on the fifteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot –
"The Devil" "Le Diable".

Dear Unknown Friend,

It is whilst still being impressed by the Arcanum of inspiration, with the winged Entity pouring living water from one vase to another, that we find ourselves confronted by another winged entity holding a tapered torch above two beings bound to a pedestal, on which he is standing upright. This is the Arcanum of counter-inspiration, to which we now have to proceed.

And if the fourteenth Arcanum introduced us to the mystery of the Tears and the Temperance of Inspiration, the fifteenth Arcanum of the Tarot will introduce us to the secrets of the electrical fire and the intoxication of counter-inspiration. This is a further chapter in the drama of the destiny of the divine Image and Likeness which we are now obliged to read.

But before we begin the meditation on the Arcanum of counter-inspiration, we must take account of the intrinsic difference between meditation on the other arcana and meditation on the arcanum "The Devil". It is as follows.

As it is a matter in the Tarot of a series of spiritual or Hermetic exercises, and as, on the other hand, every spiritual exercise tends to lead to the identification of the meditant with the subject of meditation, i.e. to an act of intuition, the fifteenth arcanum of the Tarot, in so far as it is a spiritual exercise, cannot – and must not – lead to an experience of identification of the meditant with the subject of meditation. One should not arrive at an intuition of evil, since intuition is identification, and identification is communion.

Unfortunately many authors – occultist and non-occultist – have dealt without rhyme or reason with the profound things of both good and evil. They believed they should "do their best" with respect to depth and penetration in their treatment of the subject of the mysteries of good and, equally, that of the secrets of evil. It is thus that DOSTOYEVSKY released into the world certain profound truths of Christianity, and, at the same time, certain secret practical methods of evil. This is above all the case in his novel "The Possessed" ("Besy").

Another example of an excessive accentuation of the knowledge of evil – and therefore of an occupation of consciousness with evil – is the preoccupation with the problem of the twofold – even threefold – evil amongst German Anthroposophists. Lucifer and Ahriman (and even Adzura), the two principles of evil, subjective and objective, the seducing principle and the hypnotizing principle, have so taken possession of the consciousness of Anthroposophists that there is hardly a single thing which would not fall under the category of being Ahrimanic or Luciferic. Science is Ahrimanic in so far as it is objective; Christian mysticism is Luciferic in so far as it is subjective. The East is under the domination of Lucifer, because it denies matter; the West is under the domination of Ahriman, because it has created a material civilization and tends to materialism. All machines – including the apparatus of radio and television – incorporate Ahrimanic demons. Laboratories are the fortresses of Ahriman; theatres – and churches, some believe – are the fortresses of Lucifer. And so on. Anthroposophists are led to classify thousands of facts from the point of view of the category of evil which is revealed through them – which suffices to occupy them for the whole day. And so to occupy oneself amounts to contact with evil and a corresponding reduction of living and inspiring contact with good. The result is a lame wisdom without wings, deprived of creative élan, which only repeats and comments to satiety what the master, Dr. Rudolf Steiner said. And yet Doctor Rudolf

Steiner has certainly said things of a nature to awaken the greatest creative élan! His series of lectures on the four Gospels, his lectures at Helsingfors and Düsseldorf on the celestial hierarchies, etc., without mentioning his book on the inner work leading to "Initiation" ("Wie erlangt man Erkenntnisse der höheren Welten?"; English translation: "How to Know Higher Worlds", "Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment", etc.), would alone suffice to inflame a deep and mature creative enthusiasm in every soul who aspires to authentic experience of the spiritual world. But it is the preoccupation with evil which has clipped the wings of the Anthroposophical Movement and which has rendered it such as it is since the death of its founder: a movement for cultural reform (art, education, medicine, agriculture) deprived of living Esotericism, i.e. without mysticism, without gnosis and without magic, which have been replaced by lectures, study and intellectual work aiming at establishing a concordance between the writings and stenographed lectures of the master.

One ought not to occupy oneself with evil, other than in keeping a certain distance and a certain reserve, if one wishes to avoid the risk of paralyzing the creative élan and a still greater risk — that of furnishing arms to the powers of evil.

One can grasp profoundly, i.e. intuitively, only that which one loves. Love is the vital element of profound knowledge, intuitive knowledge. Now, one cannot love evil. Evil is therefore unknowable in its essence. One can understand it only at a distance, as an observer of its phenomenology.

This is why you will certainly find luminous descriptions — although schematic — of the celestial hierarchies by St. Dionysius the AREOPAGITE, St. BONAVENTURA, St. THOMAS Aquinas, and also in the Cabbala and in the work of Rudolf STEINER, but you will search in vain for an analogous tableau with regard to the hierarchies of evil. You will certainly find amongst sorcerers' grimoires and in the practical Cabbala (by Abramelin the MAGE, for example) a host of names of particular beings belonging to the hierarchies of evil, but you will not find a description of their general classification in the manner of that by St. Dionysius the Areopagite of the celestial hierarchies. The world of the hierarchies of evil appears like a luxuriant jungle, where you can certainly, if necessary, distinguish hundreds and thousands of particular plants, but where you can never attain to a clear view of the totality. The world of evil is a chaotic world — at least, such as it presents itself to the observer.

One ought not to enter this jungle if one does not want to lose one's way there; one should be an observer from outside. This is why meditation on the Arcanum "The Devil" must obey the laws indicated above concerning the attitude towards evil. It will therefore be a matter of an effort to comprehend this Arcanum at a distance by means of the phenomenological method.

Let us proceed therefore to the phenomenology of the Card itself.

It represents three personages. The one in the middle is larger than the others, and he is standing upright on a pedestal to which the other two are attached.

The personage in the middle is an androgynous entity equipped with bat's wings raised upwards. His right hand is raised; his left hand is directed downwards, it holds a lighted torch. His wings and legs are blue. On his head he wears a yellow skullcap with two

yellow horns in the form of antlers. He is naked, save for his skullcap and a red girdle.

The two other personages before him and on either side of him represent a naked man and woman. They have tails and the ears of beasts. On their heads they are wearing red skullcaps and are bearing horns in the form of antlers. Their arms are tied behind their backs, and a cord passed around their necks fastens them to a central ring fixed on the lower red-colored part of the central personage's pedestal. With respect to the latter, there is still a characteristic trait to mention: he is cross-eyed, his pupils focussing on the bridge of his nose.

What, therefore, is the set of ideas that is evoked, to begin with, by the card? The set of ideas, I would like to say, of a nature having a practical spiritual significance, i.e. aiming at a practical Arcanum of Hermeticism as a synthesis of Mysticism, Gnosis and Magic?

Does it have to do with the cosmic metaphysics of Evil, or the history of the rebellion of a part of the celestial hierarchies under the direction of the "ancient Dragon" who "swept down a third of the stars" (Revelation xii, 3-4)? Is it related to the entity of whom Ezekiel spoke when he said:

> "You were a guardian Cherubim, with outspread wings;
> I placed you on the holy mountain of God;
> You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.
> You were blameless in your ways,
> From the day you were created,
> Until iniquity was found in you . . .
> So I cast you as a profane thing
> From the mountain of God,
> And you, guardian Cherubim, have been driven out
> From the midst of the stones of fire.
> Your heart was proud because of your beauty;
> You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.
> I cast you to the ground . . ." (Ezekiel xxviii, 14-17)

Evidently not. The "Devil" of the card does not evoke ideas having to do with the cosmic drama of the fall of the "guardian Cherubim from the mountain of God", nor with the "ancient Dragon" waging battle against the archistrategist Michael and his celestial army. The ideas that are evoked by the totality of the Card and its context are rather those of slavery, in which two personages are found who are attached to the pedestal of a monstrous demon. The card does not suggest the metaphysics of Evil, but rather an eminently practical lesson as to how it happens that beings can forfeit their freedom and become slaves of a monstrous entity which makes them degenerate by rendering them similar to it.

The theme of the XVth Arcanum of the Tarot is one of the generation of demons and of the power that they have over those who generate them. It is the Arcanum of the creation of artificial beings and of the slavery into which the creator can fall — becoming a slave of his own creation.

In order to be able to grasp this Arcanum, it is necessary firstly to take account of the fact that the world of evil consists not only of fallen entities of the celestial hierarchies (with the exception of the Seraphim) but also of entities of non-hierarchical

origin, i.e. entities who, in the manner of bacilli, microbes and viruses of infectious diseases in the domain of biology, owe their origin — to express it in the terms of Scholastic philosophy — neither to the primary Cause, nor to secondary causes, but rather to tertiary causes, namely to arbitrary abuse on the part of autonomous creatures. Thus, there are hierarchies who are "of the left" and who act within the framework of the Law, executing a strictly just function in their capacity as accusers and "putters to the trial" — whilst on the other hand there are "microbes of evil" or entities artificially created by incarnated human beings. These latter entities are demons whose soul is a special passion and whose body is the totality of "electro-magnetic" vibrations produced by this passion. These artificial demons can be engendered by human communities — such are many of the monstrous "gods" of the Phoenicians, Mexicans and even Tibetans of the present day. The Canaan Moloch who demanded the bloody sacrifice of the first born, mentioned so often in the Bible, is not a hierarchical entity — either of Good or of Evil — but rather an evil egregore, i.e. a demon created artificially and collectively by human communities infatuated with the thrill of fear. The Mexican Quetzalcoatl is a similar instance of this. There, also, it was a matter of a demon created and worshipped collectively.

With respect to Tibet, we find there the singular phenomenon of the conscious — semi-"scientific" — practice of the creation and destruction of demons. It appears that in Tibet the Arcanum with which we are occupied is known, and it is practiced as one of the methods of occult training of the will and imagination. The training consists of three parts: the creation of "t u l p a s" (magical creatures) through concentrated and directed imagination, then their evocation and, lastly, the freeing of consciousness from their hold on it by an act of knowledge which destroys them — through which it is realized that they are only a creation of the imagination, and therefore illusory. The aim of this training is therefore to arrive at disbelief in demons after having created them through the force of imagination and having confronted their terrifying apparitions with intrepidity.

This is what Alexandra DAVID-NEEL, who wrote with a deep knowledge of the subject, had to say about it:-

> "I have questioned several lamas on this subject (of incredulity). "Incredulity comes sometimes," answered a geshes (graduate) from Derge (a town in Kham, Eastern Tibet). "Indeed, it is one of the ultimate objects of the mystic masters, but if the disciple reaches this state of mind before the proper time he misses something which these exercises are designed to develop, that is fearlessness. Moreover, the teachers do not approve of simple incredulity, they deem it contrary to truth. The disciple must understand that gods and demons do really exist for those who believe in their existence, and that they are possessed with the power of benefitting or harming those who worship or fear them. However, very few reach incredulity in the early part of their training. Most novices actually see frightful apparitions"...
> And again:--
>
> "I had the opportunity of talking with a gomchen of Ga (Eastern Tibet) called Kushog Wanchen about sudden deaths which occured while calling up demons. This lama did

not appear inclined towards superstition and I thought he would agree with my opinion on this matter." Those who died were killed by fear. Their visions were the creations of their own imagination. He who does not believe in demons would never be killed by them." I was much astonished when the anchorites replied in a peculiar tone of voice: "According to that it must also follow that a man who does not believe in the existence of tigers may feel confident that none of them would ever hurt him even if he were confronted by such a beast." ... and he continued: "Visualizing mental formations, either voluntarily or not, is a most mysterious process. What becomes of these creations? May it not be that like children born of our flesh, these children of our mind separate their lives from ours, escape our control, and play parts of their own? Must we not also consider that we are not the only ones capable of creating such formations? And if such entities (tulpas, magical creatures) exist in the world, are we not liable to come into touch with them, either by the will of their maker or from some other cause? Could one of these causes not be that, through our mind or through our material deeds, we bring about the conditions in which these entities are capable of manifesting some kind of activity? ... One must know how to protect oneself against the "tigers" to which one has given birth, as well as against those that have been begotten by others." (Alexandra David-Neel, "Magic and Mystery in Tibet", London, 1967, pp. 146-148)

This is what the Tibetan masters thought of magic that creates demons. But the French master of magic, Eliphas LÉVI, hardly thought otherwise about it:

"The devil-making magic which dictated the Grimoire of Pope Honorius, the Enchiridion of Leo III, the exorcisms of the Ritual, the verdicts of inquisitors, the suits of Laubardement, the articles of the Veuillot brothers, the books of MM. de Falloux, de Montalembert, de Mirville, the magic of sorcerers and of pious persons who are not sorcerers, is truly a thing to be condemned in some and infinitely deplored in others. It is above all to combat these unhappy aberrations of the human mind by their exposure that we have published this book. May it further the holy cause!" ("Ritual", ch. xv)

"Man is himself the creator of his heaven and hell, and there are no demons except our own follies. Minds chastised by truth are corrected by that chastisement, and dream no more of disturbing the world" ("Ritual", ch. xxii). (Eliphas Lévi, "Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual"; trsl. A.E. Waite, London, 1968, pp. 322-323, 410)

For, in accordance with his experience of them, Eliphas Lévi saw in demons — such as incubi and succubi, the Leonard masters presiding over witches' sabbaths, and the demons of the possessed — only creations of human will and imagination, projecting, individually or collectively, their content into the malleable substance of the "astral light" and thus engendering demons, which are therefore engendered in Europe in exactly the same way as the Tibetan "tulpas".

The art and method of "making idols", which is forbidden by the second of the Ten Commandments, is ancient and universal. It seems that at all times and everywhere demons have been engendered.

Both Eliphas LÉVI and the Tibetan masters are in agreement not only with respect to the subjective and psychological origin of demons but also with respect to their objective existence. Engendered subjectively, they become forces independent of the subjective consciousness which engendered them. They are, in other words, magical creations, for magic is the objectification of that which takes its origin in subjectivity. Demons that have not arrived at the state of objectification, i.e. at that of an existence separate from the psychic life of their parents, have a semi-autonomous existence which is designated in modern psychology by the term psychological "complex". C.G. JUNG regarded these as parasitic entities, which are to the psychic organism what, for example, cancer is to the physical organism. A psychopathological "complex" is therefore a demon — which has not come from outside but is engendered by the patient himself — in a state of gestation: it is still not born, but it certainly has an almost autonomous life of its own, nourished by the psychic life of its parent.

> C.G. JUNG said on this subject: "It appears as an autonomous formation intruding upon consciousness... It is just as if the complex were an autonomous being capable of interfering with the intentions of the ego. Complexes do indeed behave like secondary or partial personalities possessing a mental life of their own." (C.G. Jung, "Psychology and Religion"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, "The Collected Works of C.G. Jung", vol. 11, London, 1958, pp 3-4)

Now, "an autonomous being capable of interfering with the intentions of the ego" and which "possesses a mental life of its own" is nothing other than what we understand by a "demon".

It is true the "demon-complex" still does not act from outside the psychic life of a single individual — it still does not have the "freedom of the city" of the motley and fantastic community of "tulpas" or objective demons, which can sometimes — as was the case with St. Anthony the Great and the holy priest of Ars — even bruise the victims of their assault with quite real blows. The noise from such an assault that everyone hears and the bruise on the body of the victim which everyone sees is no longer purely and simply psychological — it is already objective.

How are demons engendered?

As with all generation, that of demons is the result of the cooperation of the male principle and the female principle, i.e. the will and the imagination, in the case of generation through the psychic life of an individual. A desire that is perverse or contrary to nature, followed by the corresponding imagination, together constitute the act of generation of a demon.

The two personages the one male and the other female, attached to the pedestal of the central personage of the card of the XVth Arcanum — the demon, are therefore not the creation or the children of the central personage, as one might be tempted to believe, seeing their small build in comparison with the size of the demon's stature. Rather, on the contrary, it is they who are the parents of the demon and who have become enslaved by their own creation. They represent perverse will and imagination contrary to nature, which have given birth to an androgynous demon, i.e. to a being endowed with desire and imagination, which dominates the forces that engendered it.

With respect to generation effected collectively, the demon — which in this case is known by the term "egregore" — is likewise the product of will and imagination, which in this case are collective. The birth of such an "egregore" in modern times is known to us:-

"A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of communism" — such is the first phrase of the "Communist Manifesto" of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels of 1848. The "Manifesto" continues: "All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French radicals and German police-spies." (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party"; trsl. S. Moore, London, 1932, p. 8)

Meanwhile — we may add — the spectre has grown in stature and power, engendered by the will of the masses, born from the despair following the "industrial revolution" in Europe, nourished by the resentment accumulated amongst the masses through the generations, armed with a dummy intellectuality which is Hegel's dialectic misconstrued — this spectre has grown and continues to make the rounds in Europe, and in other continents... Today already one third of mankind is impelled to bow down before this god and to obey it in everything.

What I am saying here concerning the generation of the most imposing modern egregore is in perfect accord with Marxist teaching itself. Because for Marxism there is no God or gods — there are only "demons" in the sense of creations of the human will and imagination. This is the fundamental Marxist doctrine of the so-called "ideological superstructure". According to this doctrine it is the economic interest — i.e. the <u>will</u> — which creates — i.e. <u>imagines</u> — ideologies :- religious, philosophical, social and political. For Marxism all religions are, therefore, only such "ideological superstructures" — i.e. formations due to the human will and imagination. Marxism-Leninism itself is only an ideological superstructure, a product of intellectual imagination, on the basis of the will having arranged — or re-arranged — social, political and cultural things in a certain manner. And this method of production of ideological superstructures on the basis of the will is precisely what we understand by the "collective generation of a demon or egregore".

Now, there is the Word, and there are egregores before whom humanity bows down; there is revelation of divine truth, and the manifestation of the will of human beings; there is the cult of God, and that of idols made by man. Is it not a diagnosis and prognosis of the whole history of the human race that at the same time that Moses received the revelation of the Word at the summit of the mountain, the people at the foot of the mountain made and worshipped a golden calf? The Word and Idols, revealed truth and "ideological superstructures" of the human will, operate simultaneously in the history of the human race. Has there been a single century when the servants of the Word have not had to confront the worshippers of idols, egregores?

The Fifteenth card of the Tarot contains an important warning to all those who take magic seriously: it teaches them the magical arcanum of the generations of demons, and of the power that the latter have over those who have engendered them.

We who have had experience of the demon or egregore in question above, and of the demon engendered by a collective will infatuated with national ambitions and making use of an imagination drawn from the province of biology — the national-socialist demon or egregore — know from first-hand experience what terrible power resides in our will and imagination, and what responsibility it entails for those who unleash it into the world! How true it is that he who sows the wind, shall reap the whirlwind! And what a whirlwind!

We people of the XXth century know that the "great pests" of our time are the

"egregores" of "ideological superstructures", which have cost humanity more life and suffering than the great epidemics of the Middle Ages.

And having this knowledge, is it not time that we said to ourselves: l e t u s b e s i l e n t. Let us make our arbitrary will and imagination silent; let us impose on them the discipline of silence. Is this not one of the four traditional rules of Hermeticism: to dare, to will, to know, to be silent? To be silent is more than to keep things secret; it is more even than to guard oneself from profaning the holy things to which a respectful silence is owed. To be silent is, above all, the great magical commandment of not engendering demons through our arbitrary will and imagination; it is the task of silencing arbitrary will and imagination.

Let us resign ourselves, therefore, to the "Work" of contributing constructively to tradition — spiritual, Christian, hermetic and scientific. Let us thoroughly immerse ourselves in it, let us study it, let us practice it, lastly, let us cultivate it, i.e. let us work not in order to overthrow but in order to build. Let us range ourselves amongst the builders of the great Cathedral of mankind's spiritual Tradition — and let us try to contribute to it. May the Holy Scriptures be holy for us; may the Sacraments be sacraments for us; may the hierarchy of spiritual authority be the hierarchy of authority for us; and may the "perennial philosophy" — and also truly scientific science — of the past and present have friends in us and, should it be the case, respectful collaborators!

This is what the commandment "to be silent" entails — the commandment of not engendering demons.

Now, it is always excess owing to intoxication of the will and imagination which engenders demons. If — to return to the example cited above — Marx and Engels had simply defended the interests of the industrial workers without having let themselves be carried away by their intoxicated imagination to make statements of universal historical significance, and even cosmic significance, such as the statement that God does not exist, that all religion is only the "opium of the people", that all ideology is only a superstructure on the basis of material interests (and that this has always been so, everywhere), they would have been contributors to Tradition, because care for the rights and well-being of the poor is an integral part of the very essence of tradition — Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu and humanist. Carried away by indignation — not devoid of a nobility of heart — and by the bitterness of disenchantment with the classes in power — not devoid of a foundation in experience — they cast in the same mold God, the bourgeoisie, the Gospels, capitalism, mendicant orders, industrial monopolies, idealistic philosophers, and bankers... and they declared all this, without a second thought, as riff-raff of the history of the human race. There is no doubt that with them it was a matter of an excess — a going beyond the limits of competence and sober and honest knowledge — which they did not in any way doubt, having been carried away by the intoxicating impulse of radicalism, i.e. by a fever of the will and imagination to change everything utterly at a single stroke. And it is this fever of desire to change everything utterly at a single stroke which gave birth to the demon of class hatred, atheism, disdain for the past, and material interest being placed above all else, which is now making the rounds in the world. This demon is being heroically combatted at present (1963) by the head of a large communist country, who is doing all that is humanly possible to replace it by a spirit of care for the people and for their well-being — the spirit that underlies the work of the sober Marx and Engels, i.e. taken into the framework of Tradition, not exceeding either their competence or the limits of their cause itself. "To be silent" is the Prudence of the

XIVth Arcanum of the Tarot, opposed to the intoxication whose essence and dangers are revealed by the XVth Arcanum of the Tarot. The inspiration of "Prudence" can be turned into the intoxication of "The Devil". The inspiration aiming at alleviating the lot of the poor and oppressed, and at re-establishing social justice, is able — as was the case with Marx and Engels — to change into the intoxication of radicalism, i.e. to become feverish will and imagination desiring to change everything utterly at a single stroke. This is the relationship between the inspiration of the Angel of the XIVth Arcanum and the generation of the demon of the XVth Arcanum. The history of the human race supplies us with numerous examples of the transformation of the initial inspiration of Prudence into the subsequent intoxication-generating demons. It is the relationship between the XIVth Arcanum and the XVth which explains how the religion of love was able to give way to the funeral-pyres of the Inquisition, how the idea of hierarchical collaboration within mankind became a caste system (or rather the struggle between the classes), how the scientific method was transformed into materialistic dogma, and how, lastly, the facts of biological evolution were used as a basis for the doctrine of intrinsic inequality between races and the corresponding superiority of certain nations.

The list is in no way complete, but it suffices to show the practical significance of the relationship between the XIVth and XVth Arcana of the Tarot. It is the relationship between inspiration and counter-inspiration.

One is in the habit, since the first centuries of the Christian era, of designating this counter-inspiration straight away as the "voice of the flesh", which subsequently promoted the flourishing of the principal dogma of the Manichean and Cathar heresy, which declares Nature to be intrinsically bad. However, exact statements to the contrary were not lacking in Christian antiquity. For example, the following is what St. Anthony the Great said, who is, without doubt, an authority of the first order concerning the problem of "demon-flesh":

> "I think that the body has a natural movement, adapted to it, but which is not produced if the soul does not want it; then only a movement without passion arises in the body. There is also another movement which comes from the nourishment and pleasure the body receives through food and drink. The warmth of blood that is thus provoked excites the body to action . . . And there is another movement, in those who are struggling, which comes from the snares and jealousy of demons... It is known that the body has three kinds of carnal movements. The first is a natural movement, inherent in it... the second kind of movement in the body is produced by too abundant food and drink... the third movement comes from the evil spirits..." (St. Anthony the Great, "Apophthegmata", xxii, trsl. of underlined text by E. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer, "Early Fathers from the Philokalia", London, 1954, p.40)

These are, therefore, the principles — expounded with a clarity which leaves nothing to be desired — of traditional asceticism, based on experience and confirmed by the experience of thousands of spiritual seekers, including St. Teresa of Avila and St. Ignatius of Loyola in Spain... and Gautama Buddha in India. More than a century before Anthony, ORIGEN said:-

> "We have often said that Christians have had to take up a struggle on two fronts. For the perfect, for those who are like Paul of Ephesus, as the Apostle himself said,"... are not contending against flesh and blood, but against Principalities and Powers,

against the princes of the world of darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places" (Ephesians vi, 12). Lesser ones — those who are not yet perfect — must struggle against flesh and blood; they are still struggling against the vices and weaknesses of the flesh." (Origen, "In libro Jesum Nave", homily ix, 4; ed. W.A. Baehrens, "Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte", vol. 7, Leipzig, 1921, pp. 349-350)

In other words, beginners have to struggle against the second movement of the body (following St. Anthony's schema) whilst the more advanced have to deal with demons and with hierarchies of the left. The scale of temptation therefore corresponds to that of spiritual advancement: temptation is progressively spiritualized as man becomes more spiritual. The temptations of "Principalities and Powers" (archai kai exousiai) which the spiritually advanced have to face are incomparably more subtle than those for a beginner. If one says, "merit necessitates" (noblesse oblige), one should add "simplicity protects".

This is why Origen gave the following advice:- "One should not . . . speak to disciples, at the beginning of their formative period, of profound and secret mysteries; but one should confide to them that which concerns the improvement of habits, the formation of discipline, and the first elements of religious life and simple faith. Such is the milk of the Church; such are the first elements for initial beginners." (Origen, "In libro Judicum", homily v, 6; ed. Baehrens, pp. 496-497)

It is the law of prudence which is required. Now, the arcanum of Prudence, the XIVth Arcanum of the Tarot, represents a guardian Angel who is charged with his office. Origen is of the same opinion as we, and as the unknown author of the Tarot. He said, in fact:

"When we begin to come to the cult of God, when we receive the principles of the word of God and of heavenly doctrine, it is the "princes of Israel" who must deliver these beginnings to us. By "princes of Israel" one should, in my opinion, understand the <u>angels of Christian people</u> who, according to the word of the Lord, assist the smallest in the Church and look always upon the face of the Father in heaven. These are they who are "princes", and from whom we must receive the principles..." (Origen, "In libro Judicum", homily vi, 1; ed. Baehrens, p. 498)

Origen attributed not only the office of prudence to guardian Angels ("the angels of Christian people") in conformity with the teaching of the XIVth Arcanum of the Tarot, but he also taught the principle of the teaching concerning the "liberation of angels" through man, as found in the preceding Letter. He said, in fact:-

"But we must not always rely on the angels to fight for us; they help us only at the beginning, when we ourselves are commencing. With the progress of time, we should arm ourselves for combat. Before we learn to do battle, so that we will consider giving ourselves up to the battles of the Lord, we are succored by the princes, by the angels. Initially, we receive the provision of celestial bread... as long as we are children, we are nourished by milk; when we begin to hold to the word of Christ, we live as children under the authority of tutors and procurators. But when we have tasted the sacraments of celestial militia, when we have nourished ourselves on the bread of life, listen how the apostolic trumpet invites us to combat! It is with a loud voice that Paul cried to us, saying: "Take the whole armor of God, that you may be able

to withstand the wiles of the devil." He no longer permits us to hide ourselves under the the wings of our nurse; he invites us to the field of battle. "Gird yourself," he says, "with the breastplate of righteousness, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, and above all the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Ephesians vi, 13-17). (Origen, "In libro Judicum", homily vi, 2; ed. Baehrens, pp. 498-500)

The same teaching is found twelve centuries later with St. John of the Cross. St. John of the Cross does not grow tired of repeating that the soul who seeks God is called to renounce every created being, above and below, every being — terrestrial and celestial. He summarized this teaching by saying:

"This knowledge is referred to by David when he says: Vigilavi, et factus sum, sicut passer solitarius in tecto. (Translation: "I have watched and am become as the lonely sparrow on the housetop") (Psalm 101, 8) In other words: I opened the eyes of my understanding, and was raised up above all natural comprehension, lonely, without them, on the housetop, lifted up above all earthly considerations." (St. John of the Cross, "A Spiritual Canticle" xv, 4; trsl. D. Lewis, London, 1909, p. 122)

This solitude and isolation is the consequence that one has ceased to live "like a child under the authority of tutors and procurators", as Origen expresses it, and that one has attained a mature spiritual age. The change which then takes place is characterized by St. John of the Cross in the following way:-

"...it is at the time they (i.e. beginners) are going about their spiritual exercises with delight and satisfaction, when in their opinion the sun of divine favor is shining most brightly on them, that the Lord darkens all this light and closes the door and spring of the sweet spiritual water they were tasting as often and as long as they desired. For since they were weak and tender, no door was closed to them, as St. John says in the Apocalypse (Rev. iii, 8). The Lord now leaves them in such darkness that they do not know which way to turn in their discursive imaginings; they cannot advance a step in meditation, as they used to, now that the interior sensory faculties are engulfed in this night. He leaves them in such dryness that they not only fail to receive satisfaction and pleasure from their spiritual exercises and works, as they formerly did, but also find these exercises distatseful and bitter. As I said, when God sees that they have grown a little, he weans them from the sweet breast so that they might be strengthened, lays aside their swaddling bands, and puts them down from his arms that they may grow accustomed to walking by themselves." (St. John of the Cross, "The Dark Night" I, viii, 3; trsl. K. Kavenaugh and O. Rodriguez in "The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross", London, 1966, p. 312)

Let us add: to walk by themselves in order to become, in the progress of time, as Origen said, combatants in the ranks of the militia of God.

This progress is accompanied by more and more subtle temptations. The "Temptations of the vices and weaknesses of the flesh" are therefore followed by the assaults of artificial demons, engendered by others or engendered collectively, which subsequently give way to more subtle temptations whose authors are entities of the fallen hierarchies. Lastly, on the threshold of the All, God himself, there is the last temptation, by way of the Void: the dark night of the

soul, of which St. John of the Cross speaks, signifying simultaneously union with God or, rather, the despair of nothing, complete and supreme nihilism....

For this is the truth of which St. Anthony the Great spoke:
"No one, if he is not tempted, will be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. For, take away the temptations and no one is saved." (St. Anthony the Great, "Apophthegmata", v)

This law is of such universality that Jesus Christ, also, had to face three temptations in the desert after the manifestation of the Holy Trinity at the time of the Baptism in the Jordan.

The ladder of perfection therefore entails that of temptation. And just as the former signifies progress from the gross to the subtle, so does the latter signify an analogous progress. In other words, inspiration is followed or accompanied by counter-inspiration.

How, therefore, does one distinguish one from the other? What are the criteria by which one must abide in order to be able to distinguish inspiration from counter-inspiration?

The following are answers given by the most experienced masters of spiritual practice:

St. Anthony the Great:- "...it is quite possible to tell the difference between the good and the bad when God grants it. A vision of the holy ones is not turbulent... it comes so quietly and gently that instantly joy and gladness and courage arise in the soul.... And the thoughts of the soul remain untroubled and unruffled, so that in its own bright transparency it is able to behold those who appear... Such, then, is the vision of the holy ones.

On the other hand, the attack and appearance of the evil ones is full of confusion, accompanied by crashing, roaring and shouting: it could well be the tumult produced by rude boys and robbers. This at once begets terror in the soul, disturbance and confusion of thoughts, dejection, hatred of ascetics, indifference, sadness, remembrance of kinsfolk, and fear of death; and then a desire for evil, a disdain for virtue, and a complete subversion of character.

When, therefore, you have a vision (or experience some inspiration – author's note) and are afraid, if then the fear is taken from you immediately and in its place comes ineffable joy and contentment; and courage and recovery of strength and calmness of thought and the other things I have mentioned, and stoutheartedness, too, and love of God, then be of good cheer and pray – for your joy and your soul's tranquility betoken the holiness of Him who is present... But when you have certain visions, and confusion overtakes you and there is tumult from without and earthly apparitions and threats of death and all the things I have mentioned, then know that the visit is from the wicked." (St. Athanasius, "The Life of Saint Anthony", trsl. R.T. Meyer, Westminster, 1950, pp. 49-51)

St. Teresa of Avila:

"Locutions (inspired – author's note) that come from the devil not only lead to no good, but leave bad effects behind them. These I have experienced, though only on two or three occasions, and each time I have had an immediate warning from the Lord that they came from the devil. Not only is the soul left in great dryness, but there is also a certain disquiet, such as I have experienced on many other occasions when the Lord has allowed me to be subjected to great temptations and spiritual trials of various sorts. But although this disquiet torments me very often, as I shall say later, it is not easy to know

where it comes from. The soul seems to resist the experience and is upset and afflicted without knowing why, for what is actually said is not evil but good...

The pleasures and joys which the devil bestows differ greatly, I believe, from those which come from God... After visions of the kind that come from the devil, the soul is not left in a calm state, but in a kind of bewilderment and most perturbed..... When the devil speaks to us, all good things seem to be hidden from the soul and to flee from it; it becomes restless and touchy, and suffers nothing but bad effects. It may seem to have good desires, but they are not strong; and the humility that remains behind is false, excitable, and lacking in tranquility."("The Life of St. Teresa of Avila", trsl. J.M. Cohen, London, 1957, pp. 177-179)

"Now let us return to the first point. These communications (interior communications) may come either from the inferior or the superior part of the soul, or from without, which does not prevent their originating from God. The most certain signs of their being divine are in my opinion these:

The first and truest is the power and authority they carry with them and their operation (i.e. they are communications and works at one and the same time)... I will explain myself at greater length. A soul is suffering all the sorrow and disquiet I have described: the mind is darkened and dry; but is set at peace, freed from all trouble and filled with light, merely by hearing the words: "Be not troubled". These deliver it from all its pains, although before, if the whole world and all its learned men had united to persuade it (that) there was no cause for grief, it could not, in spite of all their efforts, have got rid of its sadness...

The second sign is a great calm and a devout and peaceful recollection which dwell in the soul, together with a desire to praise God...

The third proof is that these words (interior communications) do not pass from the memory, but remain there for a very long time; indeed, some are never forgotten..." (St. Teresa of Avila, "The Interior Castle" vi, 6-7, 10-11; trsl. by the Benedictines of Stanbrook, revised by B. Zimmerman, London, 1906, pp. 157-159)

St. John of the Cross:-

"...there is a great difference between the visions of God and those of the evil one. For the effect of the latter is not like that of the former: those of Satan result in dryness of spirit, in a tendency to self-esteem, to accept and make much of visions; and in no degree whatever do they produce the gentleness of humility, and love of God. Again, the forms of the diabolic visions do not remain impressed on the soul with the sweet clearness of the others, neither do they endure, yea, rather, are immediately effaced, except when the soul attaches itself to them: in that case the importance attached to them causes them to be remembered naturally, but with great dryness of spirit, and without the fruit of humility and love, which issue out of the good visions, whenever they recur to the memory..."

"The effects of these (latter) visions in the soul are quietness, enlightenment, joy like glory, sweetness, pureness, love, humility, inclination (to God), or elevation of the mind to God, sometimes more of one, sometimes more of another..." (St. John of the Cross,

"The Ascent of Mount Carmel" II, xxiv, 6-7; trsl. D. Lewis, London, 1906, pp. 201-202)
This is the traditional doctrine, i.e. based on experience repeated and renewed through the centuries. People of the century of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz were strongly impressed by geometry, because philosophical opinions change, whilst the arguments and conclusions of Euclid and Archimedes remain unalterably valid. Thus, people of the XVIIth century were led to prefer the geometrical mode ("modo geometrico") of reasoning to all other kinds of reasoning. However, there exists still something else of as unalterable validity and universality as the geometrical method: this is authentic spiritual experience. As we see from the above quotations from spiritual masters of the fourth and sixteenth centuries, authentic spiritual experience remains the same across the ages just as geometrical reasoning remained the same across the ages — until Lobachevsky. It is this immutable reality of spiritual experience which is the foundation and essence of Hermeticism, i.e. of knowledge founded on first-hand experience of spiritual reality across the ages. Hermeticism is therefore not limited to the spokesmen for so-called Hermetic orders, brotherhoods or societies, but it also includes all those who have had something to say with real knowledge of spiritual reality and of the path towards this reality — all those, in other words, who bear witness to the mysticism, gnosis and magic whose unity is Hermeticism. For this reason we have many more masters from whom we are able to learn — and, in fact, from whom we should learn — than are contained in the list of authors of so-called authorities: Cabbalists, Rosicrucians, esotericists, Theosophists, occultists, etc. In any case, this was really the point of view of Papus, Sédir, Marc Haven and others — all of whom belonged to orders, fraternities and societies for initiation — when they recognized in Maître Philip of Lyons their master, although not only did he not belong to any organization for initiation but also he considered them more or less superfluous. And if this did not prevent them in any way from rallying around Maître Philip of Lyons, it was because they believed — not without reason, moreover — to have found a master in him, i.e. an authentic witness to spiritual reality, to Hermeticism understood in exactly the same sense as we understand it in these Letters: as the tradition of authentic spiritual experience across the ages, which has the aspects named "mysticism", "gnosis" and "magic".

Such was also the point of view of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin who, being a member of the initiation order of Martinez de PASQUALLY, did not hesitate to act in the same way with regard to the shoemaker of Goerlitz, Jacob BOEHME, as Papus and his friends acted with regard to Maître Philip of Lyons.

Now as for myself, I also know very well that neither St. Anthony the Great, nor St. Teresa of Avila, nor St. John of the Cross were members of any initiation organization — that, therefore, they were not representatives of the so-called initiation tradition — but, as they are authentic witnesses to spiritual reality, I take the same attitude towards them as Papus and his friends took with regard to Maître Philip of Lyons or that Saint-Martin took with regard to Jacob Boehme. For Hermeticism is in no way exclusiveness, but depth. Therefore all that which is deep belongs to it. It is not "legitimate initiation" which constitutes the chain — or rather the flow — of the tradition — but rather the niveau and authenticity of spiritual experience and the depth of thought that it comprises. Therefore it is Initiation per se which constitutes the Hermetic tradition across the ages, and not the "transmission of initiation" by way of "rituals and formulas". If the tradition depended only on the latter, it would

already long ago have been either extinguished or certainly lost in the jungle of quarrels over rights and legitimacy. Now, it is he who knows from first-hand experience who represents the Tradition, and it is his authentic knowledge which is his legitimacy. If this were not so, the old argument "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" would have rendered the tradition sterile by reducing it to the niveau of the scribes and Pharisees, i.e. to the niveau of erudition and rules. Let us add in parentheses that the one who advanced this argument historically, Nathanael, had the moral courage not to attribute to it the role of a decisive criterion, since he followed the invitation from Philip: "Come and see". This had the consequence that he said: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" and that he heard the words of the Master, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John i, 45-51). This is the formula of the essence of the Tradition: to see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending.

Now, all those who have seen "heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending" belong to the Tradition and represent the Tradition, including St. Anthony the Great, St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, to mention only those witnesses spoken of in this Letter.

Do you know, dear Unknown Friend, who is an Initiate of the first order in the Tradition of Christian Hermeticism? This is St. Francis of ASSISI, the "poverello" without erudition and without rules — a star of the first order in the heaven of mysticism, gnosis and magic! For not only did he see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending, but also he was rendered at one accord with the Initiator himself of all authentic initiations in the act of initiation accomplished by the seraphim from above...

But let us return to the fifteenth Arcanum of the Tarot.

Until now we have treated it from the point of view of the generation of "artificial" demons — individual generation and collective generation. Concerning the latter, i.e. the generation of "egregores", there is an important point that still needs to be specified. It follows:--

Occult literature — above all in France — of the XIXth and XXth centuries advances the thesis (which has become almost classical, and seems to be generally accepted) that as well as bad "egregores" good ones can equally well be engendered through collective will and imagination, i.e. "good demons" are engendered in exactly the same way as evil ones. According to this thesis, all depends on the generating will and imagination: if they are good, they engender positive egregores; if they are bad, they engender negative egregores. There are, according to this thesis, "good artificial demons" as well as bad ones — just as there are good and bad thoughts.

From a practical point of view this thesis gives rise to a practice where one endeavors to collectively create an egregore for this special purpose: as a "group spirit" or spirit of the fraternity concerned. This egregore once created, it is believed that one is able to rely on it and that one has an efficacious magical ally in it. It is believed that every group has an active "group spirit" which renders it influential with regard to the outside world as well as with regard to its members. It is believed that real and effective traditions are, in the last analysis, only strong and well-nourished egregores, which live and

act across the ages. Not only do all initiation orders and fraternities owe their life and influence to their egregores, but it is believed that churches do also. Therefore, Catholicism is believed to be an egregore generated by the collective will and imagination of believers. It is the same with the eastern Orthodox Church, and with Lamaism, etc.

This is the thesis and its main consequence in practice. The exactness that I think I must give concerning this point amounts to the counter-thesis that "good artificial demons" do not exist and one cannot engender "positive egregores".

The reasons in support of this are as follows:-

In order to engender a psychic or "astral" entity, it is necessary that the psychic and mental energy that you produce to this effect coagulates, i.e. enfolds. A form is not produced by radiation; it is produced only by coagulation or enfoldment. Now, good only radiates; it does not at all enfold. It is always evil which does this.

You cannot engender a "demon of pure love" or an "egregore of universal love" because the quality of will and imagination required to this end is not held together as a formation centered in itself, but forms an alliance — one of "radiating movement" — with the activity of the world of spiritual hierarchies.

The psychic and mental energy of love would never give rise to the formation of an individualized psychic or "astral" entity; it would immediately put itself wholly at the disposal of the celestial hierarchies, saints, and God.

Therefore, although one can certainly engender demons, one cannot engender artificial angels.

If there are egregores of initiation orders and religious — and other — communities, they are always negative. The egregore of Catholicism, for example, is its parasitic double (the existence of which it would be futile to deny), which manifests itself as fanaticism, cruelty, "diplomatic wisdom" and excessive pretensions. But in so far as the positive spirits of communities are concerned, they are never egregores, but rather they are entities from the ten hierarchies (ten, because the tenth hierarchy — that of mankind — is included here). It is therefore a human soul, an angel or an archangel who assumes responsibility for the direction of a human community in a positive sense. Thus, it is not at all an egregore but rather St. Francis himself who is the spiritual director of the Franciscan order. It is similarly so for the Church. Its guiding spirit is Jesus Christ.

Nations are under the direction of archangels, in so far as it is a matter of their true mission and spiritual progress. There are, at the same time, egregores or demons engendered by the collective will and imagination of nations. The "French cock" therefore disputes with the Archangel of Memory over the direction of the French nation. And it is the same with other nations.

One could object: if the good — psychic and mental energy of good — does not accumulate, how can one explain miracles or the magical action of certain "holy places", statues, icons and relics, if not by the fact that they are "magnetized" by the faith, i.e. by the will and imagination, of believers?

— Holy places, miraculous relics, statues and icons, are not depots for the psychic and

mental energy of pilgrims and other believers, but rather places or objects where "heaven opens and angels are able to ascend and descend". They are points of departure for spiritual radiation, and this radiation certainly presupposes faith on the part of believers in order to be effective, but it is not so that the "energy" which they radiate is drawn out from the believers. The faith of the latter is simply that which renders them susceptible to the healing and illuminating force which radiates from these places or objects, but it is not the source of this force.

Therefore, one can certainly say that relics, etc., are "magnetized" — long ago and by someone — in the sense that they have become doors, windows or window-frames, so to say, open to the heavens and allowing its activity to enter. But they are not "magnetized" by believers in the sense of being accumulators of fluid emanated by believers and constituting the active agent in subsequent healings, conversions and illuminations. The law of relics, etc., is that the more one takes from them, the more force they radiate, whilst the law of things magnetized fluidicly is that of an inverse ratio between the energy deposited and the energy consumed. The magnetizer knows very well that he cannot go beyond a certain level in the consumption of his vital fluid without risk to his health and his life — his vital fluid being regulated by the law of quantity: the more that is consumed, the less that remains. The saint, however, does not heal by giving his vital fluid to the sick person; he heals him by taking the latter's sickness upon himself and by raising it within himself as an offering ("host") to heaven.

It is similarly so with talismen and relics. Talismen are depots of magical energy; they are under the law of quantity. In contrast, relics are windows open to heaven; they are under the law of quality, i.e. the more energy they give out, the more they become capable of giving out. They are inexhaustible as sources of energy. They are not depots for, or accumulators of, energy; rather, they are generators or sources of energy.

Consecrated water, for example, does not "lock up" the blessing — or the force of will and imagination of the priest who blessed it — but the blessing "hovers" above it. It re-establishes — through the sacred magic of analogy put into practice — the primordial relationship which existed between water and the spirit of God on the first day of creation, when "the spirit of God was moving on the face of the waters" (Genesis i,2). Therefore, consecrated water is not water which has become a depot for the beneficial force of consecration, but rather it has been rendered susceptible to the presence of Heaven. And a few drops of it are very effective for chasing demons away, as borne out by authentic witnesses across the centuries.

Now, here we arrive at an important question: once artificial demons are generated, how does one combat them, and how does one protect oneself and rid oneself of them?

How does one combat them?

Good does not combat evil in the sense of destructive action. It "combats" it by the sole fact of its presence. Just as darkness gives way to the presence of light, so does evil give way before the presence of good.

Modern depth psychology has discovered and put into practice the therapeutic principle of bringing unconscious complexes to the light of consciousness. Because — so it affirms — the light

of consciousness renders the obsessional complex not only visible but also impotent.

This important discovery of modern psychology is in complete accord with the spiritual reality of the "struggle" of the celestial hierarchies against evil. Because this "struggle", also, amounts to their presence alone, i.e. to bringing evil to the light of day.

Light drives out darkness. This simple truth is the practical key to the problem of how to combat demons. A demon perceived, i.e. on whom the light of consciousness is thrown, is already a demon rendered impotent. This is why the desert fathers and other solitary saints had so much experience with demons. They cast their light on them. And they did so as representatives of human consciousness in general, for whoever withdraws from the world becomes representative of the world; he becomes a "son of man". And being a "son of man" the solitary saint attracted the demons haunting the subconscious of mankind, making them appear, i.e. bringing them to the light of consciousness and thus rendering them impotent. While St. Athanasius the Great struggled against human errors and depravations in the daylight of his public life as bishop of Alexandria, his friend and brother, St. Anthony the Great, in the solitude of the Egyptian desert, struggled against the demons whose doings in the darkness of the subconscious were stirring up these very errors and depravations.

The famous "temptations" of St. Anthony were not, truth to tell, only temptations where it was a matter of the salvation and progress of his soul, but rather they were, in the first place, acts of healing the humanity of his time from demoniacal obsession. They were acts of sacred magic, bringing demons to the light of consciousness illumined from above, through which they were reduced to impotence. St. Anthony drew demons from darkness to the light of the consciousness of the "son of man", he rendered them visible, and thus impotent.

A demon rendered impotent is a deflated balloon. It is thus that certain demons engendered collectively in the Middle Ages became purely abstract and fell into forgetfulness — which was the lot, for example, of the famous demoniacal personage known by the name of "master Leonard" or the "goat of the sabbath". He disappeared from one day to the next thanks to a courageous and pure soul who deflated him.

Artificial demons, brought to the light of day and resisted, are dissipated. They disappear.

With respect to "natural" demons, i.e. entities of the hierarchies of the left, this is not so. The demon, for example, who loved Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, and who killed her suitors "fled through the air to Egypt. Raphael pursued him there, and bound and shackled him at once" (Tobit viii, 3), according to the Jerusalem Bible, and "was overtaken by the Archangel Raphael in the waste lands of Upper Egypt, and there held prisoner" (tunc Raphael Angelus apprehendit daemonium, et religavit illud in deserto superiorus Aegypti, Liber Tobiae viii, 3), according to the Vulgate.

Here it is not a question of the annihilation of the demon, but rather of changing its field of activity and the place — or, rather, mode — of its existence. The vanquished demon in the story of Tobias (which is not generally found in the Protestant Bible) was forced by the Archangel Raphael to leave the country of his victim or protégée, and to take up "exile" in Egypt and to remain there.

But it was also the presence of the Archangel Raphael — made possible by prayer and by the ritual carried out by Tobias during the three wedding nights — which forced the demon to

withdraw and to go to Egypt. –

Let us now proceed to the second part of our question: how does one protect oneself and rid oneself of demons?

It follows from the foregoing that clarity of thought and rightness of moral attitude are both necessary – and also sufficient – in order to supply the light which renders demons impotent. Nevertheless, one needs rest – time during which one is left in peace by demons, i.e. time during which they are absent.

In order to assure this, one has to resort to sacred magic. Tradition, centuries of experience, teaches us what is necessary in order to protect oneself from the approach of demons – or, if one senses them approaching, what to do in order to drive them away. Here follows some practical advice which Tradition gives us.

Make the sign of the Cross towards the north, south, east and west, each time saying the first two verses of Psalm 68 (from David):

"Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered, let those who hate him flee before him! As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before fire, let the wicked perish before God!"

And here is further advice, as simple and effective as the preceding:- If one senses depression or any other sign of approach of a demon or demons, one spits three times to the left and crosses oneself.

These two procedures have been tried across the centuries and, I repeat, are very effective. They are so above all with regard to artificial demons. With respect to entities of the hierarchies of the left, it is not so simple to protect oneself against them. For the formula: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered . . ." does not apply, truth to tell, to entities of the hierarchies of the left, because they are not enemies of God and also because they are not to be dissipated. In law one cannot win a cause simply by driving the attorney away. One must convince him of the innocence of the accused. Only then will he become silent and leave the latter in peace. It is the same with entities of the hierarchies of the left – hierarchies of "strict justice" as they are designated (with good reason) in the Cabbala. They have their joint functions as attorney or agents of the attorney, police, and witnesses for the prosecution. Imagine to yourself a law department whose agents are occupied not only with establishing the facts of crimes committed but also – and above all – with putting potential criminals to the test by setting them in conditions favorable for crime, i.e. by submitting them to temptations. Such is, in fact, the activity of entities of hierarchies of the left towards mankind. The story of Job supplies us with a renowned example of this, where Satan, who is present amongst the sons of God, says to God concerning Job:- "Does Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job i, 9-11). And with permission obtained, Satan puts Job to the test.

Thus, Satan does not accuse Job of sin committed but of a potential sin. And he sets to work to actualize it. They are "laboratory experiments", so to say, that he makes with Job in order to prove his prosecution thesis. Who needs them? God? No, because God is too noble and too generous a friend, and too tender a Father, to put his friends and children to the test. Moreover, God does not need an experimental verification of his statement made with certainty: "There is none like Job on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil" (Job i, 8).

The one who needs to test is therefore Satan himself — and, perhaps, some of the "sons of God" present at the dialogue who could have been impressed by the accusation advanced by Satan.

Now, no magical means would have sufficed in Job's case to protect him against Satan, and to drive Satan away. Job had to endure to convince Satan of the futility of his design to get him to curse God.

Entities of the hierarchies of the left must therefore be convinced during the course of real testing that they are wrong. There is no other means of making them go away. It was the same in the case of Tobias and the demon Asmodeus. Tobias had proved, having spent three nights in the wedding chamber with his fiancée in prayer, that he was not one of those "such as go about their marrying with all thought of God shut out of their hearts and minds, wholly intent on their lust, as if they were horse or mule, brutes without reason" (Tobias vi, 17 — from the version in the Vulgate). Having done so, the Archangel Raphael made the demon leave and go to Egypt. The demon was therefore vanquished by the demonstration of the fact that Tobias was not like the seven preceding suitors for Sarah's hand. The demon who "loved Sarah" wanted to protect her against a marriage that he believed would be unworthy of her. Tobias proved that he was a husband worthy of her. Without this, the heart and the liver of the fish alone would not have sufficed to make the demon give up his place as Sarah's protector to the Archangel Raphael and Tobias.

These examples, Job's "satan" and Tobias' demon, are in themselves sufficient to understand the nature of the entities of hierarchies of the left and the way in which they operate, and likewise show how one struggles against them. They are critical spirits, i.e. prosecutors, and one can vanquish them only by convincing them — under "laboratory conditions", so to say, that the accusation lacks foundation — which is exceptional and difficult. For their accusation is usually the result of work done with indefatigable zeal, and with a very lucid and very well informed intelligence — save for the intimate human domain of moral conscience, which is not accessible to them. And it is precisely the intimate domain of moral conscience from whence the decisive factor can arise which can turn the accusation to the advantage of the accused. Because one is "righteous" and "holy" only if Good and Evil fall into agreement that it is so. This is why the procedure with an "advocatus diaboli" (devil's advocate) is not only allowed but also is required preceding the declaration of a new saint by the Church.

Concerning their function as prosecutor, entities of the hierarchies of the left fulfill it in a number of quite different ways. Some do it in the tragic sense of having to do what they no longer want to do and they no longer believe; others do it with fierce conviction and passionate indignation; there are also entities from the hierarchies of the left who accuse by making use of ridicule — farce — as a means of demonstrating their prosecuting thesis. An entity belonging to this latter category is known in the western world. This is Mephistopheles, whose portrait GOETHE painted with astonishing exactness. As he is generally known — just as are Job's "satan" and Tobias' demon — one can, without going beyond the limits of discretion (cf. the beginning of this Letter), add the example of Mephistopheles to those of the "satan" of Job and the demon of Tobias.

The ridicule which Mephistopheles makes use of has a serious foundation. It is primarily human pretension and snobbery that he turns into ridicule. Here is an example of this. ---

A journalist, disenchanted with everything — and who was able to allow himself this luxury — retired with his wife from the vanity of the world and lived in a villa on a small island near Great Britain. As a good journalist with lots of experience, he took nothing for definite and he did not deny anything definitely. He lived simply from breakfast to "lunch", from "lunch" to "five o'clock tea", and from tea to supper. But something extraordinary happened to him one day. He felt a sudden desire to take some paper and write. He did this. And he produced from inner dictation a series of manuscripts with drawings — he who had never drawn — whose author declared himself to be none other than Osiris himself, from ancient Egypt, and who now seized the opportunity to recount frankly and in detail what he knew of ancient wisdom and religion in the guise of a message to mankind of the twentieth century. One reads there, expounded with pompous simplicity, the history of the struggle between the good and the wicked, and how the wickedness of the latter had its punishment in the guise of the Atlantean catastrophe. One reads there of details of the true cult celebrated in the temples of Osiris, and one sees there drawings of the candelabras, vases and other cult objects, and also portraits of Osiris and other important personages of pre-historic antiquity — who are all as alike as peas. The beneficiary of this prodigious revelation and his wife, enamored by the grandeur of the revelation and the person of the revelator, looked at the work admiringly with a view to bearing the unheard-of revelation to the knowledge of the whole of mankind. And this is how a special publishing house put before the world one volume after another of the revelation of Osiris....

The story that I have recounted is true; the publishing house is real; the volumes that it has put out are to be found, in fact, in public libraries in England; and there is, without doubt, a revelation and a revelator. Only the revelator is not Osiris but.... Mephistopheles; and the whole revelation is only a farce made by him for the... credulous? no — for spiritual snobs. For, whoever the author of this "revelation" may be — you, dear Unknown Friend, not being obliged to believe me on my word alone— whoever the author may be, I tell you, he actually said: "You who hold for very little the effort of Science, the world of thought from Plato to Kant, the treasures of authentic witness of the great mystics, the riches of the Hermetic tradition and, lastly, the Holy Scripture, the sacraments, the blood and sweat of Gethsemane, the Cross of Calvary, the Resurrection... take, therefore, what you desire — these volumes of banalities presented in a pompous manner and communicated to you, as you would wish, in an extraordinary way." --

This is an example of Mephistophelian accusation against those who do not seek the <u>truth</u> as such, but rather extraordinary circumstances of revelation... no matter what.

I would still add to this example of Mephistophelian dupery that, with a little rightness of thought and moral judgement, it is an easy thing to avoid becoming a victim of it. -

I believe, dear Unknown Friend, that the preceding has portrayed with sufficient clarity: firstly, the difference between on the one hand demons engendered artificially through human will and imagination and on the other hand entities of the hierarchies of the left; and secondly,

that the XVth Arcanum of the Tarot is that of the generation and the enslaving role of so-called "artificial demons" — the Tibetan "tulpas". It is a warning which says that we certainly have the force to generate demons but that the use of this force will render the generator a slave of the generated.

There still remains one last question for us: Were all of the pagan gods always demons, collectively engendered egregores? Is paganism in general simply a cult of demons?

Before answering this question, one has to distinguish between the "paganism" of the philosophers and initiates into the mysteries, symbolic and mythological "paganism", naturalistic "paganism" and, lastly, demoniacal "paganism". In other words, one has to distinguish firstly between the "paganism" of Hermes Trismegistus, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, etc., and the "paganism" of Homer and Hesiod. Then one must distinguish between the latter and the totality of cults of the sun, moon, stars, fire, air, water and earth. And, lastly, one has to distinguish between the latter and the totality of cults of "divinities" engendered by perverse collective imagination and will — the cults of "egregores," pure and simple.

It would be an error and a grave injustice to consider the four "paganisms" as the same thing, e.g. to see a priest of Moloch sacrificing human beings as a representative of the same cause as Plato. It would be a similar error to see the same light in the funeral-pyres of the Inquisition and the lighted lamps of the Resurrection festival — or even to see Mahatma Gandhi and a thug, a strangler for the glory of the goddess Kali, as representatives of the same cause, namely that of "Hindu paganism".

With this distinction made, one can say that the "pagan" initiates and philosophers knew of the unique God — the creator and supreme good of the world.

The books of Hermes Trismegistus, the Bhagavad-Gita, Plato, Plutarch, Plotinus and many other ancient sources prove this beyond any shadow of a doubt. The difference between the religion of the so-called "pagan" initiates and philosophers and that of Moses is simply the fact that the latter made monotheism a <u>popular religion</u>, whilst the former reserved it for the élite, for the spiritual aristocracy — although they were often fairly numerous.

With respect to the cult of the "gods" and the iconolatry that this cult entailed, the "pagan" initiates and philosophers saw in it the practice of <u>theurgy</u>, i.e. that of intercourse with entities of the celestial hierarchies either by raising themselves to them, or by rendering possible their descent and <u>presence</u> on earth — in the sanctuaries or temples or elsewhere. Hermes Trismegistus and Iamblichus treat this subject with sufficient clarity.

> Thus Iamblichus says: "They (the Egyptians) also establish a pure intellect above the world, and one impartial intellect in the whole world, and another which is distributed into all the spheres. And these things they do not survey by mere reason alone, but through the sacerdotal theurgy, they announce that they are able to ascend to more elevated and universal essences, and to those that are established above Fate, viz. to God and the Demiurgus; neither employing matter, nor assuming any other thing besides, except the observation of a suitable time. This deific and anagogic path Hermes, indeed, narrated . . . " ("De mysteriis" viii, 4-5)

And again: - " such gods as are truly divinities, are alone the givers of good; alone associate with good men, and with those that are purified by the sacerdotal art, and

> From these amputate all vice, and every passion. When these, also, impart their light, that which is evil, and at the same time demoniacal, vanishes from before more excellent natures, in the same manner as darkness when light is present; nor is it able to disturb theurgists in the smallest degree, who receive from this light every virtue, obtain worthy manners, become orderly and elegant in their actions, are liberated from passions, and purified from every disorderly motion, and from atheistical and unholy conduct" ("De mysteriis" iii, 31). (Iamblichus, "De mysteriis"; trsl. T. Tayler; "Iamblichus on the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians", London, 1968, pp. 199, 306)

These are the principal traits of the theurgy of the "paganism" of the initiates and philosophers. You can also find important details in PLUTARCH's "De Iside et Osiride" 77, in Plotinus' "Enneads" iv, 3, 11, in Hermes Trismegistus' "Asclepius" 23-24, 37, and in PROCLUS' "De sacrificio et magia" (= "The Hieratic Art").

It goes without saying that the "paganism" of the initiates and sages, when not degenerated, had nothing to do with the cult of collectively engendered demons.

The "paganism" of the poets, symbolic and mythological paganism, was — in so far as it was not a symbolic version of the wisdom and magic (theurgy) of the mysteries — a universal humanism. Its "gods" were, truth to tell, human personages — heroes and heroines, divinized or poetized, who were prototypes of the development of the human personality, i.e. planetary and zodiacal types. Thus Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Venus, Mercury, Diana, Apollo, etc., were not at all demons, but leading prototypes of the development of the human personality who, in their turn, corresponded to cosmic — planetary and zodiacal — principles.

Concerning the third form of "paganism" — "naturalistic paganism" — it was "cosmolatry", i.e. it did not go beyond the limits of Nature — like natural science today. It was, therefore, "neutral" from the point of view both of the true spiritual world and of the demons. It accepted the latter as a fact with which it had to come to terms. But in bowing before Nature it did not engender demons, because this would be contrary to Nature — for the generation of demons presupposes a perverse will and imagination.

There remains, lastly, the fourth form of paganism — that of the worship of collectively engendered demons. This form of paganism, which is due to the degeneration of the other three forms — and above all of "naturalistic" paganism — is the only form of paganism where demons were engendered, worshipped and obeyed, and which led to the whole of paganism being renamed unjustly and calumniously as the "demoniacal religion". The Church Fathers, who — with a few exceptions — treated it as such, had in truth to do above all with degenerate paganism and, consequently, were right in seeing in the popular pagan cult of their time either the cult of demons or the fables of poets. But amongst them such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Augustine, and Synesius, who had knowledge of the paganism of the initiates and philosophers (which was the pure essence of paganism as such), spoke of what "all men possess as a healthy anticipation of the moral doctrine". As Origen expressed it:

> "There is . . . nothing amazing about it if the same God has implanted in the souls of all men the truths which He taught through the prophets and the Savior." (Origen, "Contra Celsum" i, 4; trsl. H. Chadwick, Cambridge, 1953, pp. 8-9)

This is something quite different from paganism as the worship of demons.

With respect to Christian Hermeticism, it cannot see otherwise than that as the coming of

Jesus Christ was an event of universal significance, it had its universal preparation, i.e. that just as the prophets of Israel until John the Baptist prepared the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, so did the initiates, sages and righteous men of the whole world prepare the world for his Word and his Spirit. The incarnated Logos was awaited everywhere wherever one suffered, died, believed, hoped, loved... The Jews prepared for the Incarnation; the pagans prepared themselves to recognize the Logos. Thus Christianity had its precursors everywhere — the choir of precursors included not only the prophets of Israel, but also the initiates and sages of paganism.

Meditations on the Major Arcana of the Tarot

XVIth Arcanum:- "La Maison-Dieu".

"The Tower of Destruction"

My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit rejoices in God,
my Savior.
For he has regarded the low estate
of his handmaiden.
For behold, henceforth all generations
will call me blessed...
He has scattered those who have proud thoughts
in their hearts.
He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
And he has exalted those of low degree.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich he has sent away empty-handed
(Luke i, 46-53)
He who exalts himself will be abased,
And he who humbles himself will be exalted.
(Luke xiv, 11)
The kingdom of God is as if a man should
scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and
rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow,
he knows not how. (Mark iv, 26-27)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The generation of artificial demons and the nature of the entities of hierarchies of the left constituted the principal theme of the preceding Letter. One could ask oneself, after having let pass in review before the inner eye all that one knows concerning the diverse beings of the world of Evil, whether it is not so, given that the flesh itself is innocent and the kernel of the human being is in the image of God, that it is the demons and entities of the hierarchies of the left alone who are the cause of evil, and that without them there would be no evil in human life and in the history of mankind.

The question is not new. It was a preoccupation in antiquity, already in the third century of our era. This is what Origen, who was born in Alexandria around 184 or 185 A.D., says concerning it:

"... the simpler sort of believers in Christ the Lord suppose that all the sins that men have committed come from the persistent influence of the contrary powers on the sinners' minds, because in this invisible contest the powers are found to be superior; that if, so to speak, there were no devil, no man would ever sin at all. We however, who look more carefully into the reason of things, do not think that this is so; especially when we consider the acts that arise clearly from the necessities of our body. Are we to suppose that the devil is the is the cause of our being hungry or thirsty? I suppose there is no one who would venture to maintain this. If then he is not the cause of our being hungry or thirsty, what of that

condition when an individual has attained the age of puberty and this period has called forth the exciting movements of the natural heat? It follows without a doubt that, as the devil is not the cause of our being hungry or thirsty, so neither is he the cause even of that impulse which is naturally called forth at the time of maturity, that is, of the desire for sexual intercourse. It is certain that this impulse is by no means always aroused by the devil, so as to lead us to suppose that if there were no devil our bodies would not have the desire for such intercourse.

Then again, let us consider in regard to food, — if it be true, as we have shown above, that this is not sought for by men at the instance of the devil, but from a natural instinct — whether human experience, supposing there were no devil, could possibly employ such great self-control in partaking of food as absolutely never to exceed the limit, that is, never to take anything but what the occasion demanded or more than reason permitted, and that it should never happen that men went astray in the observance of due measure and moderation in their food. I for my part do not think that, even if there were no impulse from the devil to urge men on, this rule could be so observed by them that no one would exceed due measure and moderation in partaking of food, not at any rate before they had learned this lesson by long practice and experience. What then? In regards to food and drink it would be possible for us to go wrong even apart from the instigation of the devil, if we happened to be caught at an intemperate or careless moment; and are we to suppose that in regard to the control of the sexual apetite and the natural desires we should not be affected in a similar way? My own opinion is that the same process of reasoning can also be applied to the rest of the natural emotions, such as covetousness, anger, sorrow or any others whatever, which by the fault of intemperance exceed the limits of their natural measure. The fact is therefore clear that, just as in regard to things that are good the mere human will is by itself incapable of completing the good act, — for this is in all cases brought to perfection by divine help — so also in regard to things of the opposite kind we derive the beginnings and what we may call the seeds of sin from those desires which are given to us naturally for our use. But when we indulge these to excess and offer no resistance to the first movements towards intemperance, then the hostile power, seizing the opportunity of this first offence, incites and urges us on in every way, striving to extend the sins over a larger field; so that while we men supply the occasions and beginnings of our sins, the hostile powers spread them far and wide and if possible endlessly.. ".. (Origen, "De principiis" III, ii, 1-2; trsl. G. W. Butterworth, "On First Principles", New York, 1966, pp.213-214)

Here, therefore, is a clear answer : there is in man — and notably in his soul, and not in his body— a seed of evil of his own, without which temptation coming from outside would not exert any action on him. Because temptation would be impotent if it did not find a terrain already prepared in the human soul.

Now, as the XVth Arcanum is related to demoniacal evil, so the XVIth Arcanum is related to human evil, i.e. to evil which does not come from outside, but which certainly has its origin within the human soul.

The unfortunate misunderstanding locating innate human evil in the body instead of in the soul is due to a tendency towards a materialistic interpretation of the Biblical story of Paradise and the Fall. Indeed, if Paradise is understood as a place on the terrestrial or material plane, and if the Fall is similarly understood as having taken place on this plane, innate human evil cannot be

understood otherwise than as biologically hereditary, i.e. that it is the flesh which bears it and transmits the seed of evil from generation to generation. Then it is the flesh which is the enemy of the soul and against which one has to struggle. Hence one "disciplines" it by flagellation, one weakens it by depriving it of food and sleep, and one scorns it and mistreats it in many ways — one is ashamed of one's body.

However, it is the body which, rightly, has more reason to be ashamed of the soul inhabiting it, than the latter of the body. For the body is a miracle of wisdom, harmony and stability, which does not merit scorn but rather the admiration of the soul. For example, can the soul boast of moral principles as stable as the body's skeleton? Is it as indefatigable and as faithful in its sentiments as, for example, the heart, which beats day and night? Does it possess a wisdom comparable to that of the body, which knows how to harmonize such opposing things as water and fire, air and solid matter? Whilst the soul is torn by opposing desires and feelings, this "contemptible" body knows how to unite opposing elements and make them collaborate: the air that it breathes, the solid matter of food, the water that it drinks, and the fire that it produces unceasingly within it... And if this does not suffice to change scorn into respect, admiration and gratitude, then one can recall, if one is a Christian, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, inhabited this flesh and that he honored it to the point of uniting himself with it in the Incarnation. Similarly, if one is a Buddhist or Brahmanist, one should not forget that Buddha and Krishna, also, inhabited this flesh and that it served them well in the accomplishing of their respective missions.

Negative asceticism, directed against the body and not for celestial things, is the practical consequence of the materialistic interpretation of Paradise and the Fall. However, the fact alone that a Cherubim "was placed at the east of the garden of Eden, with a Flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" (Genesis iii,24), suffices to drive away any shadow of a doubt: here it is a matter of a plane higher than the terrestrial plane, and it was therefore souls who committed the original sin — and the body had nothing to do with it.

The Fall occurred prior to the terrestrial life of mankind — this is the Hermetic doctrine (cf. Hermes Trismegistus, "Kore Kosmu" 24,25,26) which was taken up by Pythagoras and Plato, and was represented in the first centuries of the Christian era by Origen. ORIGEN taught that God had created all souls equal, but that amongst these souls some sinned in the spiritual world and had to leave it for the earth: these are human souls. Others on the contrary, in turning towards God, perfected themselves and became angels. But let us give the words of Origen himself. This is what he says:

> "...the following objection is raised by many, and particularly by those who come from the schools of Marcion, Valentius and Basilides... they raise an objection on the score of the differences that exist among men on the earth. Some, they say, inherit at birth a happier lot, as for example the one who springs from Abraham and is born by promise, and the other, the child of Isaac and Rebecca who, while yet lying in the womb, supplants his brother and is said, before he is born, to be loved by God; and, speaking generally, one man is born among the Hebrews, with whom he finds instruction in the divine law, another among the Greeks who are themselves men of wisdom and no small

learning, another among the Ethiopians, whose custom is to feed on human flesh, others among the Scythians, where parricide is practiced as if sanctioned by law, or among the Taurians, where strangers are offered in sacrifice. If then they ask us, this great diversity and these various and different conditions of birth, in which certainly the power of free will has no place — for a man does not choose for himself either where or in what nation or what state of life he shall be born, — if, they say, all this is not caused by a diversity in the natures of souls, that is, a soul with an evil nature is destined for an evil nation, and a good one for a good nation, what alternative is there but to suppose that it is the result of accident or chance?..... We, however, speaking simply as men, will, in order not to nourish the insolence of the heretics (e.g. Marcion, Valentinus and Basilides) by being silent, to the best of our ability reply to their objections with such arguments as may occur to us, as follows. We have frequently shown in the preceding chapters, by declarations which we were able to quote from the divine scriptures, that God the Creator of the universe is both good and just and omnipotent. Now when "in the beginning" he created what he wished to create, that is rational beings, he had no other reason for creating them except himself, that is, his goodness. As therefore he himself, in whom was neither variation nor change nor lack of power, was the cause of all that was to be created, he created all his creatures equal and alike, for the simple reason that there was in him no cause that could give rise to variety and diversity. But since these rational creatures, as we have frequently shown and will yet show again in its proper place, were endowed with the power of free will, it was this freedom which induced each one by his own voluntary choice either to make progress through the imitation of God or to deteriorate through negligence. This, as we have said before, was the cause of the diversity among rational creatures, a cause that takes its origin not from the will or judgement of the Creator, but from the decision of the creature's own freedom.... For this reason the Creator will not appear to have been unjust when, according to the above principles, he placed everyone in a position proportionate to his merit; nor will the happiness or unhappiness of anyone's birth, or any condition whatever that may fall to his lot, be supposed to be due to chance; nor will it be believed that there are different creatures or souls that are diverse by nature."
(Origen, "De principiis", II, ix, 5-6; trsl. G.W. Butterworth, "On First Principles", New York, 1966, pp. 133-135)

The doctrine that the pre-existent soul, in having sinned, took into itself the seed of evil in the pre-terrestrial sphere, has as a practical consequence <u>positive asceticism</u>, i.e. that of the soul's atonement and reunion with God.

Positive asceticism does not struggle against the body but rather against the seed of evil in the soul, for the sake of its reunion with God. IF, for example, the only food that Teresa NEUMANN had for decades was the host from the Sacrament of Holy Communion, this was not because she struggled against the body or despised it but rather because she really lived from the Holy Sacrament without prejudicing the health of the body. And if, for example, another passes the night in prayer, without sleep, he does not do so in order to deprive the body of rest, but rather in order to unite with

God in prayer. St. MARTIN gave his coat to a poor man not because he wanted to make his body suffer from the cold but rather because he wanted to put an end to the suffering of his neighbor, whose body was deprived of protection against the cold. St. Anthony went into the desert not in order to make his body suffer but rather in order to be alone in the presence of God. A monk renounces marriage not because he hates love, women and children but rather because he is fired by the love of God and there is no room in him for another love.

Positive asceticism is universal. Everyone practices it. A scientist who shuts himself in his room with a view to pursuing his studies does so because he is taken up with the truth that he is seeking and not because he wants to deprive his body of sun, fresh air and other benefits or pleasures of the world outside his room. A ballerina fasts much so as to keep her body slender and supple. A doctor interrupts his sleep during the night if he is called out to a sick person. A missionary lives in a miserable hut in a village in Africa — as is his wish — not because he loves misery but because he wants to share the lot of his brothers.

The principle of positive asceticism is found enunciated in the Gospel in a way that could not be clearer:-

> "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it." (Matthew xiii, 44-46)

Positive asceticism is therefore the exchange of good for better.

Let us now return to the problem of innate human evil. What is it?

It is a h a m k a r a, the sense of self, due to a v i d y a, primordial ignorance, caused by maya's power of projection (viksepa-shakti), associated with maya's power of obscuration (avarana-shakti), which consists in the illusory identification of the true Self (a t m a n) with the empirical self — as is clearly attested by the revelation of Scripture (shruti), direct authentic experience (pratyaksha), tradition (smirti) and inference (anumana). This is the answer according to the ancient wisdom of India, from the mouth of Shankara (ninth century A.D.), the author of this summary and and synthesis (cf. "Viveka-cuda-mani", 105-107, 111-113, 343-346; English trsl. by Swami Madhavananda, Mayavati, 1932).

It is desire (tanha), engendered by ignorance (avidya), which consists in attributing the central role to an illusory mental construction of the "self", whilst the center is nowhere, or everywhere, answers Buddhism (cf. "The Prajnaparamita of Nagarjuna").

The other current of tradition, the right wing of the entity of Wisdom, if you wish — the western (Egyptian-Jewish-Christian) current — gives another reply. According to it, innate human evil is not due to primordial ignorance (ἀγνωσία), but rather to the sin of knowledge at one's own instigation instead of that through God. Pre-Christian Hermetic treatises (e.g. "Kore Kosmu" and "The Divine Pymander") and the Bible (Genesis) are in agreement that it is original sin which underlies innate human evil.

Both the Hermetic treatises and the Bible state that the original sin was committed in heaven (Hermeticism) or paradise (the Bible) before the original Fall (πρώτη κάθοδος). Both pre-Christian Hermeticism and the Bible describe this original sin as an act of disobedience towards God, i.e. a separation of the human will from that of God, and a discordance between these two wills, caused by the desire for another type of knowledge than that of revelation and for another subject of knowledge than God and his revelation through the world.

Among the Hermetic texts, it is Kore Kosmu which speaks in the most explicit manner of the sin prior to the Fall (whose consequence and punishment was the Fall). Here is the pertinent text:-

"18. Having thus spoken, God mixed together the two remaining elements, water and earth, and breathed into them a certain life-giving substance, and spoke over them certain secret spells, potent indeed, but not so potent as those which he had uttered before. These things he stirred well together; and when the scum which floated on the surface of the mixture had become translucent, he took this scum, and out of it he fashioned the vital spirits of (from) the animal (circle, i.e. the zodiac).

19. But the residue of the mixture he handed over to the souls that had by this time made progress, those souls that had ascended to 'the places near the stars', and had been given a new name, and were called 'holy daemons'; and he said to them, 'My children, offspring of my being, take the residue left over from my handiwork, and let each of you fashion something, relying on his own ability; and I will set before you as models these things which I have made'... and then he withdrew...

20. And God arranged the zodiac in accord with the movings of Nature; and having bestowed on it powers of all-various working, he bade it be productive of all the animals that were to be in all time to come (i.e. all that were to be born after the making of the first specimen, or pair, of each kind — note added by Walter Scott).

21. (And God promised) to join to the visible works of their hands the invisible vital-spirits, and to give to each of the creatures that should be made power to generate others like itself, in order that the souls might not thereafter be obliged to make anything else beside what they made at first."

22. Horus: "Tell me then, mother, what did the souls make?"
And Isis said: "When the souls, my son Horus, had received the mingled mass, they first examined it, and sought to find out of what ingredients it was compounded; but this it was not easy for them to discover. Thereupon they feared they might incur the Father's anger for having tried to find out; and they betook themselves to doing the work they had been bidden to do... They fashioned the race of birds... fishes... quadrupeds... reptiles...

24. But the souls, my son, thinking that they had now done something great, began to arrange themselves in presumptuous audacity (or "impudent curiosity" — περίεργος τόλμα), and transgress God's commands; for they sought to vie with the gods in heaven, claiming nobility equal to theirs, in that the souls themselves had been made by the same Maker. And so they now began to overstep the bounds of their own divisions of the atmosphere; for they would not any longer abide in one place, but were ever on the move, and thought it death to stay in one abode.

25. But when the souls did thus, my son, the Lord of all (so Hermes said...) failed not to mark it; and he sought a way to punish them. And so the Ruler and Master of all, thought good to fabricate the human organism, to the intent that in it the race of souls might through all time suffer punishment" ("Kore Kosmu", 18-22, 24-25; trsl. W. Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, Oxford, 1924, pp. 469-473)

Now, let us look at the salient facts of this text: souls are entrusted with fashioning animals according

to their celestial models in the zodiac; but instead of accomplishing this synthetic work, "they first examined it (the mixture), and sought to find out of what ingredients it was compounded", i.e. they gave themselves up to analysis, preferring analytical knowledge to creative synthetic work; this had the consequence that they changed their fundamental attitude from the vertical attitude (God-soul) to the horizontal attitude (soul-world) and "were ever on the move" in the horizontal, "for they would not any longer abide in one place" — i.e. the immobility of the vertical — since they "thought it death to stay in one abode".

Let us now compare these salient facts with those of the Biblical account. There, man is placed by God in the garden of Eden — called to the creative work of "tilling it and keeping it" (Genesis ii,15). He lives under the law of the vertical: there are all the trees of the garden from which he eats, i.e. methods of ecstasy and enstasy, whereby through prayer, meditation and contemplation the soul is elevated to God. And there is only one prohibition — that of "eating" from a single "tree", the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day that he eats of it he will die. Man in Paradise "gave names to all the animals" that God placed under man's dominion "so that whatever man called every living creature, that was its name" (Genesis ii,19-20). Lastly, moved by the desire "to have their eyes opened and to be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis ii, 5), Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree and were driven out from the garden of Eden in order to cultivate the land.

The similarity, if not identity, of the two narratives leaps out at one. In both it is a matter of the sin of "impudent curiosity" (or "presumptuous audacity"); in both man follows the desire "to have his eyes opened and to be as a god"; in both man is entrusted with a creative magical task with regard to the animals; in both man changes his fundamental attitude from the vertical to the horizontal — which has the consequence that he incarnates, with the consequences of incarnation: suffering, toil and death.

Concerning the points of difference between the two accounts: souls fashioning animals, man only giving them their names; "the places near the stars", the garden of Eden; the multitude of souls, Adam and Eve; the composition of the mixture of the Father, the tree of knowledge of good and evil — they are easily understood if one takes account of the difference that there is in general between the Genesis of Moses and the treatise Kore Kosmu. The latter teaches, i.e. it gives an exposition of a teaching, whilst the former recounts the dawn of mankind and world history. The one is a commentary on the world, whilst the other is a chronicle of it. This is why even the facts and events in Kore Kosmu are presented in an intellectualized way, i.e. in so far as and in as much as they are stated with sufficient clarity as ideas. With regard to the narrative in Genesis, it only presents to the mind of the reader, with magical force, the facts relevant to the spiritual history of the world and mankind. Kore Kosmu wants to convince, whilst Genesis awakens profound memories of a remote past which slumber in the depths of the soul — memories from the "collective unconscious" as Jung would have said.

Being a magical text, Genesis does not say that man "fashioned" the animals, but rather that "he gave them names". Now, the "name" is the formative principle in the language of magic. To give a name means to say, in magic, to assign a mission, to charge with a function and at the same time to render capable of acquitting it. Man, according to Genesis, gave the animals created by God their specific missions and functions on the plane of realization — which entailed a specific organism. He fashioned them by giving them names with respect to the plane of realization.

With respect to "the places near the stars" and the garden of Eden, here again the Biblical

account is magical: it does not aim so much at answering the question "Where in the cosmos was mankind to be found before the primordial Fall?" as the question, "What was mankind doing and what was happening around it before the Fall?"

Now, the answer in Genesis is that mankind was set in a garden "in order to till it and keep it". This means to say that the dawn of humanity did not take place in a desert where nothing happens, or even in a jungle where everything sprouts forth and grows without the regulating and directing control of the spirit or, lastly, in the conditions of a city or town where nothing sprouts forth and grows but where everything is caused and is done through the regulation and direction of the Spirit. A "garden" is thus the state of the world where there is cooperation and equilibrium between Spirit and Nature, whilst a "desert" is the state of immobile passivity both of Nature and Spirit, a "jungle" is the state of activity of Nature alone, and a "town", lastly, is that of activity of Spirit alone. One could say, making use of Hindu philosophical language, that a "garden" corresponds to the state of sattva of nature (prakriti) towards the spirit (purusha).

And it was in such a "sattvic" milieu — or "garden" — that humanity was placed and was assigned its primordial and eternal mission: to cultivate and maintain this "garden".

Let us stop here for a moment, dear Unknown Friend, to breathe in again, after the magnitude and significance of this compressed and lapidary statement from Genesis has so taken our breath from us. The primordial and eternal mission of mankind is thus to cultivate and maintain the "garden", i.e. the world in a state of equilibrium and cooperation between Spirit and Nature! What a world of content is found enclosed in seed form in this statement! May spiritual light — moral and practical, mystical, gnostic and magical — radiate forth when one opens one's mind and heart to the touch of this seed-statement!

One then understands in a split second, that it is not necessary either to do, or to leave alone; either to build systems of thought, or to let all thought pass through the head without control; either to devote oneself to exercises of occult, ascetic and mystical training, or to do without constant and continuous endeavor, — that it is necessary to work — and to allow growth; to think — and to await the growth and ripening of thought; that it is necessary for the magical word to be accompanied and followed by the magical silence; that it is necessary, in a word, to cultivate and to maintain!

To cultivate and to maintain. Culture and Tradition. To will and to dare — to know and to be silent.

Here is the essence of the mission of Hermeticism, which is the memory working in the depths of our souls of the primordial and eternal mission of mankind: that of cultivating and maintaining the unforgettable garden of the dawn of mankind. There are "trees" to cultivate and maintain in this garden: the methods or ways of uniting Earth and Heaven — the rainbow of Peace between that which is below and that which is above. In India these methods or ways of union are called "Yoga". There the following ways of union are taught: hatha-yoga, jnana-yoga, bhakti-yoga, karma-yoga, tantra-yoga, mantra-yoga and raja-yoga, i.e. union through breathing and the circulatory movement of life (prana), union through thought, union through feeling, union through conduct, union through love, union through the magic of the word and union through the will.

Black Elk, the guardian of the sacred pipe of the Sioux tribe, who went blind owing to his advanced age, revealed to Joseph EPES BROWN (in "The Sacred Pipe", Baltimore, 1953) the seven traditional Sioux rites or ways of man's union with the Father (which is the Great Spirit) and the Mother (which is the Earth), which constitute the soul of the spiritual life of the Red-Indian

tribes from the coast of the Gulf of Mexico as far as Maine in the north and from Georgia as far as Idaho in the west.

But in so far as we — Christian Hermeticists — are concerned, the "trees" or "Yogas" of the garden that we want to cultivate and maintain, are given to us in the "seven pillars of the house that Wisdom has built", i.e. the seven "days" of Creation (including the sabbath), the seven miracles of the Gospel of St. John, the seven "I am" sayings of Jesus Christ and, lastly, the seven Sacraments of the Church.

Such are the "trees" of the garden that we cultivate and maintain, i.e. the mysteries of union — mystical, gnostic, magical and Hermetic — of that which is below with that which is above. For mysticism, gnosis, magic and Hermetic science are the four branches of the "river" which flows out of our garden of Eden "to water" — the "river" which "divided and became four rivers".

Let us therefore imitate with respect and gratitude both Swami Vivekananda of India and Black Elk of the North American Sioux, concerning their faithfulness to the task of cultivating and guarding that which Providence wanted to entrust them with of the memory of the garden of Eden — by cultivating and guarding with the same faithfulness what Providence certainly wants to entrust us with of the memory of this same garden. And let us not trouble ourselves about the lot of those whose Culture and Tradition differs from ours: God, who sees all, will certainly not forget to crown the head of every cultivator and faithful guardian of His garden. —

Another point of difference between "Kore Kosmu" and Genesis is the multitude of souls, on the one hand, and Adam-Eve, on the other. Here again the difference is explained by the semi-"philosophical" nature of "Kore Kosmu", in contrast to the magical nature of Genesis. "Kore Kosmu" has substances in mind, whilst Genesis speaks of the act. From the point of view of substance it was a multitude of souls who caused and underwent the Fall; from the point of view of the act they were only one, since their act was one, having been committed collectively. Now, it was Adam-Eve who committed it.

Thus, there are two answers to the question, "What is innate human evil?" The one — given by the left wing of traditional Wisdom — is "ignorance"; the other — given by the right wing of traditional Wisdom — is the sin of illicit knowledge.

Contradiction? Yes and no. The two answers are contradictory in so far as ignorance and knowledge are opposites. But they are in agreement in so far as innate ignorance is a consequence of the original sin of the will, which became infatuated with the desire to replace knowledge due to revelation by knowledge due to experimentation. There is certainly a difference, but there is in no way a contradiction. The difference consists in that the oriental tradition puts the accent on the cognitive aspect of the fact of discord between human consciousness and cosmic reality, whilst the occidental tradition puts it on the moral aspect of this same fact.

The oriental tradition sees in innate human evil a kind of misunderstanding, or under-valuing, where consciousness mistakes the empirical personality — relating to the body and the psychic life — for the true Self which is immutable and eternal. In contrast, the occidental tradition sees here the consequence of the sin of having wanted to be "like gods, knowing good and evil", i.e. the disfiguration of the "likeness" of God, although the image — which corresponds

to the "true Self" of the orientals — has remained intact. And it is the "empirical self" which bears the features of disfiguration due to original sin. Therefore it is not a question of the erroneous identification of the true self (or "image of God") with the "empirical self", but rather of the disfiguration of this latter. The identification would be perfectly justifiable if the "empirical self" had remained in the "likeness of God", i.e. if it had not been disfigured as a consequence of the Fall.

In other words, the difference between the two traditions is that in the oriental tradition one aspires to <u>divorce</u> in the marriage of the "true Self" and the "empirical self", whilst the occidental tradition regards this marriage as indissoluble. The "true Self", according to the occidental tradition, cannot or should not rid itself of the "empirical self" by repudiating it. The two are bound by indissoluble links for all eternity and should together accomplish the work of re-establishing the "likeness of God". It is not the freedom of divorce but rather that of reunion which is the ideal of the occidental tradition.

It is thus in the <u>will</u> that the original sin took place and brought about the Fall. Genesis describes this sin of the will as the desire to arrogate to oneself knowledge of good and evil, to become "like gods".

But Genesis does not confine itself to the first stage of the Fall in Paradise — although this is the decisive one — but adds three subsequent stages: notably <u>Cain's fratricide</u>, the <u>generation of Giants</u>, and the building of the <u>tower of Babel</u>.

Although these three subsequent stages are simply a logical development from the original sin committed in Paradise, they are nonetheless new stages in so far as the <u>realization</u> of the original sin in the <u>terrestrial</u> domain of mankind's spiritual history is concerned. For Cain's fratricide is the primordial phenomenon containing the seed of all subsequent wars, revolutions and revolts in the history of the human race. The generation of Giants is the primordial phenomenon (the "Urphänomen" of Goethe) which is the proto-historical seed of all subsequent pretensions in the history of the human race for individuals, groups and peoples to play a domineering role as divine sovereigns, and thus all pretensions of being "supermen", The Caesars who arrogated divine honor and authority to themselves, Nietzsche's "superman" ("Uebermensch"), and likewise the diverse fascist and communist "Führers" of our century, are only particular manifestations of the primordial "gigantism" of which Genesis speaks. And the building of the tower of Babel of Genesis is the primordial phenomenon containing in seed form all subsequent tendencies in the history of the human race towards the conquest of Heaven by means of forces acquired and developed on the earth.

At the root of Cain's fratricide is the revolt of the "lower self" against the "true Self" — of the fallen "likeness" against the intact "image". At the root of the generation of giants is the marriage of the "lower self" with entities of the fallen hierarchies — instead of with the "true Self". And at the root of the building of the tower of Babel is the collective will of "lower selves" to achieve the replacing of the "true Self" of the celestial hierarchies and God with a superstructure of universal significance fabricated through this will.

Revolt, possession and substitution of the fabricated for the revealed — with these three sins there correspond three "falls" and effects entailed by them. Cain, who killed his brother Abel, became an <u>exile</u>, he became a <u>wanderer</u>; the generation of giants was followed by the <u>Flood</u>;

the building of the tower of Babel had as its effect the thunderbolt of the "descent of the Lord", who "scattered them (i.e. the builders) abroad over the face of all the earth" and "confused their language", so that they would no longer understand one another's language.

Just as the building of the tower of Babel is the summary of the preceding stages of sin — those of revolt and "gigantism", so the effect of the building of the tower of Babel — the thunderbolt dispersing its builders and confusing their language — is the summary of the effects of the two preceding sins. This is why, it seems, the sixteenth Card of the Major Arcana of the Tarot represents only the blasted tower and the thunderbolt — quite disregarding the flood and Cain's exile. For the tower blasted by lightning suffices to reveal to serious meditation the comprehensive Arcanum of the relationship between the will and destiny — between what one wants and what happens.

For to wander is the inevitable lot of the revolt of the "lower self" against the "higher Self"; to be drowned is the lot entailed by the pretension to be a "superman"; and to be blasted by a thunderbolt is the fate — as inevitable as the two preceding — of building, collectively or individually, it does not matter, a tower of Babel.

The Arcanum "The Tower of Destruction" ("Maison-Dieu") teaches a general and universal law that it presents in the comprehensive form of the tower of Babel. A general and universal law — this means to say a law which operates both on a small scale and on a grand scale, in individual biography as well as in that of mankind, and in the past, present and future equally. According to this law, he who rebels against his "higher Self" will no longer live under the law of the vertical but rather under that of the horizontal, i.e. "he will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth". He who unites himself with an entity of the fallen hierarchies, instead of with his "higher Self", to the point of being possessed, will be drowned, i.e. he will fall prey to madness. This happened to Nietzsche, the inspired author of works lauding the "superman" and the antichrist. Likewise, this happened to humanity at the time when "giants were on the earth", "these were the mighty men of old, the men of renown". For the flood inundated the earth not only with water but also with that other "water" which drowns consciousness and memory — that very "water" of forgetfulness and imbecility which inundated Nietzsche. It is thus that the very advanced civilization of Atlantis was drowned in forgetfulness, just as the cradle continent of this civilization was engulfed by waters. It is thus that the "primitive" tribes and nomadic peoples, disinherited from their past and obliged to begin everything again, began to live in caves or camp under trees. There were once powerful kingdoms and magnificent towns in Africa, but their descendants had lost all memory of them and gave themselves up entirely to the daily life of "primitive" tribes — the life of hunting, fishing, agriculture and war... The forgetting on the part of the indigenous Australians was even more complete.

Similarly, he who builds a "tower" to replace revelation from Heaven by what he himself has fabricated, will be blasted by a thunderbolt, i.e. he will undergo the humiliation of being reduced to his own subjectivity and to terrestrial reality.

The "law of the tower of Babel" has already been stated in the thirteenth Letter on the Tarot with respect to certain occult practices aiming at achieving a kind of immortality by means of the crystallization of energy emanated from the physical body to the point of resisting death. There it was a matter of building an individual "tower of Babel" consisting of superimposed "doubles" in ascending order from the physical body. It was the aspect of "building" alone which was in question there, without the other aspect of this law being dealt with — that of the "thunderbolt". Now, under the title of the XVIth Major Arcanum of the Tarot there is occasion to deal with the entire law, i.e. that of the "thunderbolt" as well as the aspect of "building".

We pointed out above that the law of the tower of Babel is universal, i.e. that it works both in individual biography and in humanity — and even in other hierarchies. The point of this law is that all autonomous activity from below inevitably meets with divine reality above. What one has built through the autonomous effort of the "lower self" must, sooner or later, be confronted by divine reality, and undergo the effects of comparison with it. The law — or Arcanum — of the "tower of Babel" is manifest, for example, in the fact of Purgatory after death. For every man who is not a saint or fully righteous man builds a kind of "tower of Babel" which is his own. His actions, opinions and aspirations — autonomous or personal — constitute a "private world" that he has built and that he bears with himself into the spiritual world after his death. This subjective world must there pass through the trial of meeting with trans-subjective spiritual reality — the thunderbolt. And this meeting of subjectivity with spiritual reality is the essence of the post-mortem stage known by the name of "purgatory".

Purgatory is therefore the state of the soul where the actions, opinions and aspirations of the past life are seen in the true light of day of trans-subjective Consciousness. No one judges it; it is the soul itself who judges itself in the light of a completely awakened conscience.

One often speaks of the "darkness" into which the soul is plunged on entering purgatory, and also of the "solitary confinement" that it undergoes there. There is truth in these descriptions of the state of the soul in purgatory, but it is necessary firstly to understand them in order to be able to rightly appreciate their truth. Seen from without, a soul who enters the state of purgatory disappears from the sight of other souls and is thus plunged into the darkness of invisibility and inaccessibility. It is in this sense, i.e. in the sense of being inaccessible, that one can certainly say that the soul in purgatory undergoes "confinement". For the soul is then outside of contacts and relationships with the "free" beings of the spiritual world.

But seen from within, a soul who enters into purgatory is plunged into the absolute light of trans-subjective Consciousness which, being so luminous, seems to envelop and make the soul so concentrated as to become inaccessible to everyone.

Concerning how the purification of the soul in purgatory takes place, the nature of the darkness and confinement of the state of purgatory and, lastly, the fruits of this state — no one has given a clearer idea and a more convincing description, being founded on authentic experience, than that given by St. John of the CROSS in his "Dark Night of the Soul". In the chapters where he deals with the "dark night of the spirit" we find an analogy that is as close as possible to the state of the soul in purgatory — the experience described being in every way analogous to the experience of purification that the soul undergoes in purgatory:

> "The dark night is a certain inflowing of God into the soul which cleanses it of its ignorances and imperfections, habitual, natural and spiritual... But it may be asked: Why does the soul call the divine light, which enlightens the soul and purges it of its ignorances, the dark night? I reply that the divine Wisdom is, for two reasons, not night and darkness only, but pain and torment also to the soul. The first is, the divine Wisdom is so high that it transcends the capacity of the soul, and therefore is, in that respect, darkness. The second reason is based on the meanness and impurity of the soul, and in that respect the divine Wisdom is painful to it, afflictive and dark also. To prove the truth of the first reason we take for granted a principle of the philosopher, namely, the more clear and evident divine things are, the more dark and hidden they are to the soul naturally. Thus the more clear the light the more does it blind the eyes of the owl, and the stronger the sun's rays the more it blinds the visual organs; overcoming them, by reason of their weakness, and depriving them of the power of seeing. So the divine light of contemplation, when it beats on the soul, not yet

perfectly enlightened, causes spiritual darkness, because it not only surpasses its strength, but because it blinds it and deprives it of its natural perceptions... This is the reason why the illuminating ray of hidden Wisdom, when God sends it from Himself into the soul not yet transformed, produces thick darkness in the understanding... The soul, by reason of its impurity, suffers exceedingly when the divine light really shines upon it. And when the rays of this pure light strike upon the soul, in order to expel its impurities, the soul perceives itself to be so unclean and miserable that it seems as if God had set Himself against it, and itself were set against God. So grievous and painful is this feeling — for it thinks now that God has abandoned it — that it was one of the heaviest afflictions of Job during his trial: "Why hast Thou set me contrary to Thee, and I become burdensome to myself?" (Job vii,20). The soul seeing distinctly in this bright and pure light, though dimly, its own impurity, acknowledges its own unworthiness before God and all creatures. That which pains it still more is the fear it has that it will never be worthy, and that all its goodness is gone. In the second place, the pain of the soul comes from its natural, moral and spiritual weakness; for when this divine contemplation strikes it with a certain vehemence, in order to strengthen it and subdue it, it is then so pained in its weakness as almost to faint away... For sense and spirit, as if under a heavy and gloomy burden, suffer and groan in agony so great that death (annihilation) itself would be a desired relief... (this is a thing) wonderful and piteous... So great are the weakness and impurity of the soul that the hand of God, so soft and so gentle, is felt to be so heavy and oppressive, though neither pressing nor resting on it, but merely touching it, and that, too, most mercifully; for He touches the soul not to chastise it, but to load it with His graces..." ("Dark Night" II, v, 1-4, 6, 8-9)

"A sunbeam coming in by the window is perceived the less distinctly the more pure and free from atoms and motes the air is, but the more of these there are, the more distinct is the beam to the eye. The reason is that we do not see light itself, but by means of it we see the objects on which it falls, and these reflecting it, the light itself becomes a visible object; had it not struck them it would itself remain invisible... Thus this ray of divine contemplation, transcending as it does the natural powers, striking the soul with its divine light, makes it dark, and deprives it of all the natural affections and apprehensions which it previously entertained in its own natural light. Under these circumstances, the soul is left not only in darkness but in emptiness also, as to its powers and desires, both natural and spiritual, and in this emptiness and darkness is purified and enlightened by the divine spiritual light, but it does not imagine that it has it; yea, rather, it thinks itself to be in darkness, as we have said of the sunbeam which, though passing through the middle of the room, cannot be seen if the air is quite pure and there are no objects on which it may fall. However, the spiritual light falling on the soul if there is anything to reflect it, that is, upon any matter, however small, of perfection, which presents itself to the understanding or a decision to be made as to the truth or falsehood of anything, the soul sees it at once, and <u>understands the matter more clearly than it ever did before it entered into this darkness</u>. In the same way the soul discerns the spiritual light which is given it that it may easily recognize its own imperfection..." ("Dark Night" II, viii, 5-6)

"... the divine fire of contemplative love which, before it unites with, and transforms the soul into itself, purges away all its contrary qualities. It expels its impurities, blackens it and obscures it, and thus its condition is apparently worse than it was before, more impure and offensive. For while the divine purgation is removing all the evil and vicious humors, which, because so deeply rooted and settled in the soul, were neither seen nor felt, but now, in order to (effect) their expulsion and annihilation, are rendered clearly visible in the dim light of the divine contemplation, the soul — though not worse in itself, nor in the sight of

God — seeing at last what it never saw before, looks upon itself not only as unworthy of His regard, but even as a loathsome object and that God does loathe it..." ("Dark Night" II, x,2)

"...the light of God which illumines an Angel enlightens him, and sets him on fire with love, for he is a spirit already prepared for the infusion of that light; but man, being impure and weak, is ordinarily enlightened, as I said before, in darkness, in distress and pain — the sun's rays are painful in their light to weak eyes — till the fire of love, purifying him, shall have spiritualized and refined him, so that being made pure he may be able to receive with sweetness, like the Angels, the union of this inflowing love..." ("Dark Night" II, xii,4) (St. John of the Cross, "The Dark Night of the Soul" II, v, viii, x, xii; trsl. D. Lewis, fourth ed., revised, London, 1916, pp. 83-88, 104-106, 118, 130)

The foregoing extracts from "The Dark Night of the Soul", i.e. from chapters V to XII of Book II (concerning the "dark night of the spirit"), are the most relevant here in the doctrine of St. John of the Cross. The purification portrayed in these extracts amounts to a school of humility, and the divine light present here, which puts the soul in darkness and bears down on it by making it experience the weight of the inevitable necessity of the confrontation of human nature with divine truth, can be summarized by the image of the tower blasted by a thunderbolt, and the fall of its constructors, i.e. by the card of the XVIth Arcanum of the Tarot. The <u>thunderbolt</u> which <u>blasts</u> — this is the divine light which <u>dazzles</u> and <u>bears down</u>; the blasted tower — this is what the human powers of understanding, imagination and will have erected, which find themselves confronted with divine reality; the constructors who fall — this is the school of humility for the human powers of understanding, imagination and will. Purgatory, the way of purification which precedes illumination and mystical union, the great historical events which have had the effect that mankind had to begin again, lastly, the events in the biographies of individuals where the latter were overwhelmed by a thunderbolt in order to rise again from it either illumined, like Saul of Tarsus, or alienated, like Nietzsche — all these things which appear so different are only diverse manifestations of the same law or arcanum — that of "<u>the tower blasted by a thunderbolt</u>".

It is this law which is the theme of the "Magnificat" that I have put at the head of this letter, and where it is said:

"He has scattered those who have proud thoughts in their hearts.
He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and he has exalted those of low degree.
He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty-handed."
(Luke i,46-53)

This is the eternal law of the Tower of Babel which is sung in the "Magnificat" — the law of the tower blasted by a thunderbolt, and of the humble heart raised by the same thunderbolt to divine illumination. For the "Magnificat" is the song of a heart struck by this very thunderbolt which "puts down the mighty from their thrones, and exalts those of low degree".

The essence of this law can hardly be expressed in a more precise and concise way than it is in the Gospel according to Luke (xiv,11):-

"Every one who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Now, there are many ways of exalting oneself, and there is but a single way of being abased.

In biology, for example, it has been established that in the process of evolution there are many ways which lead to a temporary advantage due to the specialization of an organism in a determined direction, but which always ends in an impasse. Thus the great reptiles, the Saurians, attained uncontested dominion on the Earth owing to their physical strength, their agility in

movement, and their formidable natural weapons in the form of jaws and other members. But they lasted only to give way to small beings without the advantages of physical strength and natural weapons (i.e. tearing jaws and crushing limbs). These small warm-blooded beings, the first mammals, were not so specialized as the reptiles, and were insignificant beings alongside the latter.

> "Their very insignificance enabled them to survive during the long period when the land was dominated by powerful and specialized types of reptile" (Julian HUXLEY, "Evolution in Action", chap. 5, London, 1953, p. 123)

And it is also their lack of specialization which allowed them to adapt to the radical change in climatic conditions, and other changes effected by the formation of mountains towards the end of the Mesozoic period — to which the dominant reptiles were unable to adapt; and thus they disappeared.

Therefore mammals replaced reptiles as masters of the earth. Much later, however, branches of mammals specialized, "elevating" themselves in their turn by developing organs and faculties which certainly gave them temporary advantages but which brought them to an impasse, i.e. they were rendered incapable of further evolution. And it is the group of mammals who, instead of specializing themselves, were engaged in the process of general growth, or in a balanced evolution of the physical organism and the psychic faculties, who came to the crest of the wave of evolution and who eventually produced organisms capable of serving as instruments for human souls.

Therefore, expressed in biological terms, "to exalt oneself" amounts to specialization, which gives temporary advantages, and "to humble oneself in order to be exalted" means, in terms of biology, general growth, a balanced evolution, of the physical and psychic faculties of beings. And what is true in the domain of biology is also true in all other domains.

For this reason I thought it was the right place to add, at the head of this Letter, to the formula: "He who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" the following text from the Gospel according to St. Mark:

> The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. (iv, 26-28)

For it is the way of general growth or that of "humbling oneself to the role of a seed", in opposition to the ways of specialization or those of "exalting oneself by building towers", which sets this text in relief.

To grow or to build — this is the choice which it comes down to in the last analysis, the "way of salvation" and the "way of peridition"; or the way of infinite perfection and that resulting in an impasse.

The idea of hell is simply that of a definite spiritual impasse; that of purgatory refers to the process of the rejection of tendencies towards impasses of specialization, with a view to safeguarding and keeping the way of perfection open — the "way of salvation".

To exalt oneself or to abase oneself, to specialize oneself in order to gain temporary advantages or to be moved only by the hunger and thirst for Truth, Beauty and Goodness, to build a tower or to grow "sleeping and rising, night and day, without knowing how" — here is the choice that every human being, every community, every tradition or spiritual school, must make.

Now, we occultists, magicians, esotericists and Hermeticists — all those who want to "do" instead of merely waiting, who want "to take their evolution into their own hands" and "to direct it towards an aim" — are confronted with this choice in a much more dramatic way, I should say,

than is so for people who are not concerned with esotericism. Our principal danger (if not the only true danger) is that of preferring the role of "builders of the tower of Babel" (no matter whether personally or in a community) to watching over as "gardeners or vine-growers the garden or the vine of the Lord".

Truth to tell, the only truly morally founded reason for keeping esotericism "esoteric", i.e. for not bringing it to the broad light of day and popularizing it, is the danger of the great misunderstanding of confusing the tower with the tree, as a consequence of which "masons" will be recruited instead of "gardeners".

The Church was always conscious of this danger. This is why it always insisted — whilst appreciating and encouraging effort as such — on the principle of grace as the sole source for advancing on the way of perfection. This is also why it was always suspicious of so-called "initiation fraternities" or such-like groups who formed themselves at its periphery or beyond it. For, leaving rivalry and other human imperfections out of account, the serious reason for the Church to take a negative attitude towards initiation fraternities etc. is the danger of the substitution of building for growth, of "doing" for grace, and of ways of specialization for the way of salvation. I do not know if this explains the persecution of the Order of Templars, but it certainly explains the opposition of the Church with regard to Freemasonry.

Be that as it may for particular historical cases, what occupies us here is the arcanum of the tower blasted by a thunderbolt, i.e. the totality of relevant ideas and facts relating to the will "to exalt oneself", which produces specialization, which in its turn leads inevitably to an impasse. It is therefore a matter of a choice between "building" and "growth" in the domain of esotericism.

You see a fakir who is insensible to the nails on which he stretches himself out, or who has himself buried alive for a week without being suffocated, or who makes a plant grow in your presence. This fakir has realized some advantages; he can do what you cannot do. But he has attained it at the expense of general development as a human being; he has specialized himself. He will never make a contribution of value to philosophy, religion or art. With respect to his general human progress he is at an impasse — awaiting a thunderbolt from above which can enable him to get out of it.

And then the problem that disquieted Agrippa of NETTESHEIM, author of the classic work on magic, "De Occulta Philosophia"... How could it be that the author of this book in which one finds a multitude of things based on authentic experience, how could it be that he, the enthusiastic adept, became the sceptic disenchanted with life who wrote, "De Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarum" ("On the Uncertainty and the Vanity of the Sciences"), which was written during his last years of life?

The answer to this question is that Agrippa had built a "tower of Babel" which was later blasted by a "thunderbolt from above". It was higher reality which made all the "sciences of the supernatural" — to which he had devoted the best years of his life — appear vain to him. The tower was shaken, but the way of heaven was opened. He was free to begin again — i.e. in a condition to enter upon the way of growth.

The fakir, the magician — both need equally the liberating thunderbolt from above in order to return to the way of purely human evolution, i.e. to that of general growth, without the impasses of specialization. It is likewise with the specialized gnostic and mystic.

This is why we have repeated so many times in these Letters that practical (practical, that is to say, lived) Hermeticism is neither occult science, nor magic, nor gnosis, nor mysticism, but rather their synthesis. For it is a Tree and not a Tower. And it is man himself, the whole

man — who is at one and the same time philosopher and magician, gnostic and mystic — who is this Tree.

Is this therefore the Sephiroth Tree of the Cabbala? Maybe. Or the Tree of Consciousness and Life in the middle of the garden of Eden? Yes. But above all I would most love to see here the Tree of Death and Resurrection — the C r o s s from which the R o s e springs. This is the Cross that is mortifying and vivifying at the same time, the Cross where the agony of Calvary and the glory of the Resurrection are united.

For the Cross is the law of growth: that of perpetual dying and becoming. It is the way which does not lead to impasses of specialization, but rather to throughways of purification — which lead to illumination and end in union.

Practical Hermeticism is the mysticism, gnosis, magic and science of the Cross. The object of its pursuit, its basic impulse and reason for existence is the great work of growth — working through spiritual, psychic and corporeal transformation, sublimation, transubstantiation and transmutation. Yes, alchemy, the alchemical principle, is the soul of Hermeticism. One finds this principle expressed in the Gospel: that nothing should be lost and that all should have eternal life.

That nothing should be lost and that all should have eternal life — can one imagine an ideal or aim where more faith, hope and love could be implied? Whilst those who lack perfect faith resort to the surgery of the separation of the true Self from the lower self, as is the case with Sankya and with Yoga, those who lack hope make up for the absence of faculties and forces by resorting to artificial limbs, i.e. to the construction of mechanisms called to replace the functions of faculties which are absent — as is the case with constructors of machines, the authors of philosophical systems, those who carry out rituals of ceremonial magic and, in general, tower-builders. Adepts of the "great work", however, confess to "the folly of the Cross" (I Corinthians), i.e. they believe, hope and desire "that nothing should be lost and that all should have eternal life" (cf. John vi).

The Good News that the world received more than nineteen centuries ago is in no way that of the successful surgical operation of freedom from suffering; no more is it that of the successful construction of a tower attributed to man — small though the tower may be, or of unparalleled grandeur — "reaching up to heaven"; but rather it is that of resurrection, the great alchemical operation of the successful transmutation of the human being.

Liberation through spiritual surgery; power thanks to the construction of mental or other mechanisms; resurrection thanks to the cross, to the law of spiritual growth — here is the choice of ideal that every human soul must make.

Now, Hermeticism has made the choice. It has embraced for ever the law of "l i v i n g life", the cross, as its way, and resurrection as its ideal. For this reason there is nothing mechanical about it, nor is there anything surgical about it. In Hermeticism one does not build any kind of tower and one does not seek to accomplish any divorce. It is a matter solely of the transmutation of the forces and faculties of human nature, i.e. the great work of human evolution, avoiding the impasses of specialization.

I have said that in practical Hermeticism there is nothing mechanical or surgical. This means to say that one will not find any kind of device within it — mental, ceremonial or physiological — by means of which one would be able to know and accomplish things surpassing the capacity of the moral and intellectual faculties that one possesses by virtue of moral and intellectual growth due to experience, endeavor and the action of grace from above. You will not find, for example, a technical method

of awakening the centers or "lotuses" by means of the pronunciation of mantric syllables accompanied by breathing, specially adapted to this end. The "lotus centers" grow and mature in the light, warmth and life of the True, the Beautiful and the Good, without any special technical method being applied. The "lotuses", just like the whole human being, develop according to the general law:

> "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how" (Mark iv, 26-27)

Now, it is cordiality which, in practical Hermeticism, renders the heart — the "lotus of 12 petals" — warm, and not the awakening of the dormant Kundalini force through mantric syllables and respiration. It is attention due to the desire to understand which sets the lotus of intellectual initiative in motion — the "lotus of 2 petals" — and not a mantric syllable and special mode of breathing, etc.

If it was otherwise, if one applied to each "lotus" a special method with a view to its development, one would achieve their development in the sense of specialization, i.e. temporary advantages, but ultimately an impasse.

It is the same with intellectual techniques. The calculating machine certainly has its place in the scientific work of today. But it — or anything analogous to it — has no place in Hermeticism. For there, personal and original effort of thought is irreplaceable.

Neither the "Ars combinatoria" ("the art of combination") of Raymond LULL nor the "Archeometry" of Saint-YVES d'Alveydre — ingenious and well-founded though they are — were accepted in Hermeticism as intellectual instruments for discoveries and classification. Similarly, the system of Aristotelian syllogisms such as was in use amongst Scholastic thinkers of the Middle Ages, gained hardly any access amongst hermeticists.

It is because Hermeticism does not want to use any instrument that the above-mentioned excellent intellectual instruments were rejected by it. For Hermeticism has nothing to do with the desire to have "ready made answers" to all questions, obtained with minimum effort and maximum result. Its "questions" are crises and the "answers" that it seeks are states of consciousness resulting from these crises. This is why Hermeticism — being the art of becoming, the art of transformation, transubstantiation and transmutation of human consciousness — cannot make use of any intellectual instrument. The symbols, which it uses — or rather that Hermeticists let themselves make use of — are not intellectual instruments. There is nothing mechanical about them. Quite on the contrary, the symbols are mystical-gnostic-magical "ferments" or "enzymes" of thought, whose troubling presence disquiets thinking, stimulates it, and calls it to immerse itself to ever new depths.

Therefore symbols are in no way instruments of thought, but rather they are its guides and active masters, just like the "symbol of faith", the Christian Creed, which is not an instrument of thought, but rather is a stellar constellation, high above the head.

And if this were not so, I repeat, if Hermeticism were a "system" or an intellectual instrument, it could only have led to an impasse and would have died long ago. For it would have become "specialized" in its development — and therefore non-viable. It would have become a tower

of Babel awaiting a salutary thunderbolt from above.

About forty years ago, I knew an engineer who was twenty years older than me; he was an esotericist and I considered him to be a master. He had studied the 3 volumes of H.P. Blavatsky's "Secret Doctrine" in the solitude of the steppes of central Asia and had succeeded in reducing the mass of material of this work to a simple and elegant system — a circle with seven inner circles each in their turn subdivided into seven smaller circles. With time he had attained such an ability in manipulating this instrument that whatever question it was that he had to answer, he would find the answer to it almost immediately. The Russian revolution? This was 3 which aspired to 4. Science and religion? This was 5 and 4. European science and the esoteric wisdom of the Orient? This was 5 and 6.

And do not believe that all he said was these numbers — to the "non-initiated" he had many things to say each time — often very instructive and almost always quite to the point. The numbers were only for the "initiates", of whom I was one.

Now, the engineer R., without doubt had an undeniable advantage in the instrument that he constructed with the help of Blavatsky's "Secret Doctrine". He was evidently superior to others who did not have the benefit of this instrument... temporarily, for some years.

The great boredom of the impasse made his disciples disperse, each of whom sought a way of authentic experience of the living spirit. With respect to the author of this prodigious intellectual instrument, he finished by publishing a book... on the "white lady" who haunted an old house in the town where he lived. It was, I think, the same boredom which made him occupy himself with this phenomenon — a phantom, yes, but nevertheless a phenomenon of reality.

The Arcanum of the Tower blasted by a thunderbolt from above... How I would like to proclaim aloud the significance and meaning of it, so that it makes as deep an impression as possible on every seeker for profound truth! The English always say that it is sufficient to do one's best. But how can one know that it is <u>truly</u> one's best that one has done? Who can say with certainty that he has done his best? No, to say "I did my best" is quite convenient for someone who desires peace at any price, but this argument has no effect on anyone who desires the peace of certainty of conscience.

But enough of personal torments. Let us return to the Arcanum with which we are occupied.

There has never been — nor <u>can</u> be — anything mechanical in practical Hermeticism, since it does not build "towers of Babel". I said also that there is nothing <u>surgical</u> in it. This means to say that, the alchemical principle being the soul of Hermeticism, it is the "<u>marriage</u> of opposites" and not their <u>divorce</u> which constitutes the basis of practical Hermeticism.

The marriage of opposites is a principle of universal significance. This is not a compromise that one contrives, but rather the <u>cross</u> and the magic of the cross. It is thus that the "true Self" is united to the "lower self" in the human being, where the "lower self" is the cross of the "true Self" and the "true Self" is the cross of the "lower self". The two poles of the human being then <u>live in the presence</u> of one another, the result of which is an alchemical process of gradual approach to one another.

It is similar with the hierarchies "of the right" and "of the left" in the world and in the history of the world. They can neither be united nor separated. They are engaged in a

millennial-old discussion, where the arguments are facts and the conclusions are events. The hierarchies "of the left" are the cross of the hierarchies "of the right", and vice versa. There is no other hope in the world and in its history than the alchemical process of the transmutation of Evil into Good — the sacrament of penance on a cosmic scale. Divorce between the two sides would be an irreparable catastrophe.

Let us now take some historical examples nearer at hand. The wars of religion between Protestants and Catholics and also, before them, the wars between Christians and Mohammedans led — as in the recent Korean war — to the establishment of a line of demarcation, a "38th parallel". The result was recognition of one another's existence and of the need to live in one another's presence, i.e. to suffer one another's presence. The decision was made to "carry the cross" instead of resorting to the surgery of war. Now the magic of the cross, the alchemical process of transmutation, could begin to work. And the result?

Both the Moslem and the Christian world have at present not only no desire to convert one another by means of arms, but also not the least desire to populate hell with souls of the opposing religions. With respect to Protestants and Catholics, in Germany — the country which the Thirty Years' War ruined, no less than the Second World War of 1939-45 — it is the united front of Catholics and Protestants, the C D U, which is in power.

It is similar in the conflict between the free world and the communist world. Whether we like it or not, we will have to mutually recognize one another and to tolerate the existence — and the existence — of the one and the other, and to bear the suffering entailed thereby. The 38th parallel in Korea was the beginning of it. — The result will be the operation of the magic of the cross, the alchemical process of transmutation. The free world, being in the presence of its judge and untiring competitor, will gradually eliminate what it recognizes as social injustices; and the communist world, being in the presence of its judge and untiring competitor, will gradually liberalize itself and restore the freedoms that it recognizes as postulates of human nature, which one cannot and must not violate.

It is the same again with the conflict between science and religion, both in the East and in the West. They will have to suffer one another. And the result will be that there will always be more Einsteins and more Teilhard de Chardins — believing scientists and scientific priests.

The magic of the cross, alchemy operating in the "marriage of opposites", is therefore the sole hope for the world, for mankind and for its history. And it is precisely this principle of the "marriage of opposites" which underlies Hermeticism. This is why it rejects the principle of divorce and war — the surgical principle — in practice as well as in theory, spiritually, morally and intellectually. "That nothing should be lost and that all should have eternal life" — this is the soul of Hermeticism.

Its fundamental thesis that all <u>can</u> be saved, this thesis which is Christian and alchemical at the same time, is without doubt that of faith, pure and simple, i.e. due to the experience of the divine breath. But it has the virtue of taking hold not only of the heart and the will but also of the understanding. The latter can find complete satisfaction here. The following is an example of how it can be found.

The parable of the lost sheep is well known. One generally understands it as portraying the care of the good pastor for the particular soul — and without doubt it does this. Nevertheless, one can, by analogy, apply it also to the inner life of the soul — its desires, aspirations, vices and

virtues. If one does this, if one considers — by analogy — each particular force in the soul as a "sheep", one arrives at the understanding that the soul's faults and vices are not, fundamentally, monsters but rather, lost sheep. Thus, the eagerness to dominate, the desire to submit the will of other people to one's own is, fundamentally, a sheep which is lost. For at the root of the desire to dominate is found the dream of unity, union, the harmony of a choir. It is a "sheep". But instead of seeking the realization of the dream of harmony by way of love, the will seeks to realize it by way of compulsion. This is a sheep that has lost its way.

In order for it to return to the "flock", the fundamental will underlying the desire to dominate must be imprinted with the understanding that it is in the domain of love and not in that of commandment that it will find what it is seeking. Here is the return of the lost sheep — the alchemical process of transmutation of a "base metal" into "gold".

As it is the same with all the soul's faults and vices, we all have the mission of finding and bringing back to the flock (i.e. to the soul's choral harmony) the lost sheep in ourselves. We are missionaries in the subjective domain of our own soul, charged with the task of the conversion of our desires, ambitions, etc. We have to persuade them that they are seeking the realization of their dreams in a false way, by showing them the true way. It is not a matter of commandment, but rather of the alchemy of the cross, i.e. making present an alternative way for our desires, ambitions, passions, etc. It is a matter, moreover, of the alchemical "marriage of opposites".

The practical way of doing this is m e d i t a t i o n. It is deep meditation which makes present every "lost sheep" in us, with sufficient force to impress on it the alternative concerned. To meditate is to think in the presence of God — just as to pray is to speak in the presence of God.

Meditation is therefore the honest and courageous effort of the "lower self" to think together with the "higher Self" in divine light. And just as concentration necessarily precedes meditation, so does the latter lead sooner or later to contemplation, i.e. a transition is made from consideration and discourse to the immobility and complete silence of supernatural communion, where one no longer thinks something from a distance, but where this Thing itself is present and reveals itself. Contemplation is the union of the thinker with Reality. Here one does not arrive at a "conclusion", but one receives — or undergoes — the imprint of Reality.

This is therefore the "technique" — although there is, nevertheless, nothing technical in practical Hermeticism: the transition from concentration to meditation, and from meditation to contemplation.

In order to concentrate, it is necessary to have attained a certain degree of freedom and detachment. In order to meditate, it is necessary to place oneself within the light from above. And in order to experience contemplation, it is necessary to become one with this light.

For this reason the states or stages of the soul corresponding to concentration, meditation and contemplation are those of purification, illumination and union. And it is the three sacred vows of obedience, chastity and poverty which render concentration, meditation and contemplation effective, with a view to the realization of the soul's purification, illumination and union.

These are the practical "secrets" of inner "gardening" — concerned with the laws of growth (and not those of building) of the human being, in the sense of his becoming ever more human, i.e. in the sense of human evolution without the impasses of specialization.

The XVIth Arcanum of the Tarot, that of the tower struck down by a thunderbolt, reveals the nature and danger of the impasses of specialization. One must not build; it is a matter of growth — this is its essential teaching. For all the towers that are built will sooner or later be struck down by a thunderbolt — and let us add here that all freeing that owes its achievement to surgical operations entails the necessity of beginning again. The balloon that one makes fly higher, by cutting the strings of the ballast-bags and letting them fall, sooner or later will have to make a landing — the wind at some time will inevitably blow it down.

Towers will be struck down by thunderbolts and balloons will be blown down by the wind. In the last analysis, it is Death and Birth which constantly save human evolution, by acting as the thunderbolt which strikes down and as the wind which blows down. Is it not deeply significant that the spiritual head of the religion of liberation from the wheel of reincarnations is sought — and fourteen times was found — amongst children born immediately after his death? That D a l a i - L a m a s are found amongst children of the first generation after their decease, through the incontestable facts of concrete memories of their preceding incarnation? That all fourteen Dalai-Lamas are only successive reincarnations of a single soul or entity?

You will say: it is a mistake. Why? Can you prove that they are mistaken? For those who are charged with the task of finding — or rather refinding — the Dalai Lama certainly have evidence to offer.

The Buddhists say that it is mercy which enables the soul of the Dalai Lama to return. But why could it not be a matter of the Wind, i.e. the wind of compassion and mercy, just as the thunderbolt which strikes down towers is the divine love which saves us from impasses? For myself, on my part, I declare firmly that I have no doubt that death, which saves us from the impasse to which our bodily organization leads, is the action of the thunderbolt of divine love, and that birth, which gives us the possibility of participating actively in the earthly history of the human race, is due fundamentally to the action of compassion for this earth and for mankind which inhabits it — at least, for a certain class of souls.

There is nothing mechanical or automatic at the foundation of world existence. Take away the mechanical appearances and you will find that the world is something moral — crucified love. Yes, mercenaries took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each mercenary, and they drew lots for his tunic; whereas the heart of the world — naked — is love crucified in the middle of two other crucified ones, on his right and on his left.

In fact, the mechanical sciences have divided the clothing of the Word and they dispute amongst themselves for priority in the application of the universal principle (the tunic) which manifests equally in each of their special domains — whether it can be reduced to the laws of physics, or the laws of chemistry, or the laws of energy, or lastly, biological laws.

But Hermeticism, decried and misunderstood as it is, does not in any way take part in dividing the clothing of the crucified Word, nor in drawing lots for its tunic. It strives to see the crucified Word clothed in appearance by the mechanical world. And this is why the alchemists, whose preoccupation was the chemistry of "puffers" — i.e. chemical, material processes directed by moral, psychic and spiritual breath — never took the clothing of the One to whom it belonged; their "chemistry" was not separated from the Word. This is why astrologers, also, whose preoccupation was the astronomy of "influences", or the "celestial breath" did not take the planetary and zodiacal world purely and simply as a mechanism; their "astronomy" was not separated from the Word. This is why also the magicians, whose preoccupation was the "physics of breath", i.e. movements and energies caused by the human word by analogy with the divine Word, did not take the clothing alone; their "physics" was not separated from the Word. Whatever the practical errors and abuses of alchemists, astrologers and magicians, at least they are not to be found amongst those who divide the clothing and draw lots for the tunic.

But Hermeticism is not alchemy, astrology and magic — although these "sciences" are derived from it by way of specialization. For the fundamental principle of Hermeticism — as the synthesis of mysticism, gnosis, magic and philosophy — is non-specialization. For this reason it evolves by avoiding the impasses of specialization — the towers which sooner or later are struck down by thunderbolts.

Thus, the Christian Hermeticism of today has not remained behind in the great spiritual events which have changed factors of the first order in the domain of astrology — which events now play the role of "the thunderbolt which blasts the tower of astrology". What I have in mind here is that the planetary influences and the days and hours of these influences have given way to a power of a higher order. It is true that the day Sunday is the day of the Sun with respect to the human psycho-physical organism, but nowadays it is the day of Resurrection, with respect to man's psycho-spiritual life. Saturday is still the day of Saturn, but it is so only with regard to the natural, lower part of the human being. For the soul

which turns towards the spirit and for the human spirit itself, Saturday is the day of the Holy Virgin. And the influence of Venus has given way to Calvary, to Christ crucified — Friday. Tuesday is no longer the day of Mars, for the soul that aspires to the spirit, or for spiritual personages — it is the day of the Archistrategist Michael; similarly, with respect to the soul turned towards the spirit and with respect to the lives of spiritual personages, Monday is the day of the Holy Trinity, instead of being that of the Moon; Wednesday — the day of the human pastors of mankind, instead of Mercury; and Thursday — the day of the Holy Spirit, instead of Jupiter.

Consequently, sacred Magic of the present day uses formulas and signs which correspond to the supernatural power of the day and not to the natural planetary influence of the day, although, I repeat, the latter remains valid in a restricted domain — more restricted than in the past — and remains of practical value in this domain. Therefore, one invokes and unites oneself with the Holy Spirit on Thursday, instead of invoking the "genius of Jupiter", etc.

The priority of supernatural power with regard to the astral influences of days, hours and years — this is the "thunderbolt" which has "blasted" the tower of Astrology and specialized astrological magic.

Here is an example of this "thunderbolt" in action: a horoscope indicates a baleful configuration, a conjunction of Saturn and Mars in the eighth house (that of death), predicting a violent death — however, it happens that it is not Saturn and Mars which act, but rather the Holy Virgin and the Archangel Michael, and instead of the predicted death a spiritual illumination takes place...

What is true here for Astrology and Magic is also true for Alchemy, because everything which is specialized becomes a tower, i.e. it crystallizes and therefore becomes deprived of the faculty of keeping step with spiritual evolution — it leads to an impasse. And it is then the "thunderbolt from above" which enters into play and removes the obstacle to further progress.

The XVIth Major Arcanum of the Tarot is therefore a warning addressed to all authors of "systems", where an important role is assigned to a mechanical ingredient — intellectual, practical, occult, political, social and other systems. It invites them to devote themselves to tasks of g r o w t h instead of of those of construction — to tasks as "c u l t i v a t o r s and g u a r d i a n s of the g a r d e n", instead of as builders of the T o w e r of B a b e l.

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XVII th Meditation on the Major Arcanum of the TAROT - "L'Etoile" --- "The Star"

The righteous flourish like the palm tree,
And grow like a cedar in Lebanon...
They still bring forth fruit in old age,
They are ever full of sap and green
(Psalm 92)

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe...
The starry heavens above me
and the moral law within me.
(Immanuel KANT)*

Dear Unknown Friend,

The XVI th Major Arcanum of the Tarot presented us with the alternative of two ways — that of construction and that of growth — and it portrayed the dangers of the way of construction by presenting the law of the Tower of Babel to our minds and hearts.

Having understood this, one is led to decide upon the way of growth.

Now, the XVII th Major Arcanum of the Tarot — "The Star" — is the Arcanum of Growth, just as the XVI th Arcanum is that of Construction. Therefore, it is a matter now of a spiritual exercise devoted to Growth, i.e. it is time for us to concentrate on the problem of growth and to meditate on its essential aspects with a view to arriving at a contemplation of its kernel or its mystical-gnostic-magical-metaphysical essence — in a word: at its Hermetic essence. Let us therefore apply ourselves to this threefold task.

A tower is built; a tree grows. The two processes have this in common: that they present a gradual increase in volume with a pronounced tendency upwards. But there is at the same time the difference that the tower rises by leaps and bounds, whilst the tree shows a continuous elevation. This is because bricks or hewn stones are put one on top of the other in the process of building the tower, whilst the microscopic "bricks" — the cells — of a tree multiply through division and growth in volume. It is the sap in the tree, rising from the roots into the trunk and branches, which renders growth of the tree possible and which makes it shoot up through the multiplication and growth in volume of its cells.

Whilst the tower is dry, the tree is filled with sap in movement, which underlies both the division of its cells and their growth — in a word, it underlies the process of growth.

Growth is flowing, whilst construction proceeds by leaps and bounds. And what is true of the artificial and the natural in the physical domain is also true in the psychic and spiritual domain. "The righteous flourish like the palm tree . . . they are ever full of sap and green." - (Psalm 92) and "a down cast spirit dries up the bones" (Proverbs xvii, 22).

Here we are in the presence of a theme of the same significance as that of the astral "magical agent", the link between consciousness and action, which so much is made of in occult literature — namely the theme of the universal sap of life, which is the theme of the XVII th Arcanum, the Arcanum of Growth. For just as there is a mysterious intermediary agent which effects the passage from imagination to reality, so there is also a no less mysterious agent which effects the passage from the potential state of a seed to that of maturity, i.e. the passage from what is only potential to its realization — the agent of transformation from the ideal to the real.

* "Critique of Practical Reason"; trsl. L.W. Beck, Chicago, 1949, p. 258

Just as an intermediary force enters into play in the process which transforms imagination into action, i.e into an objective event, so does the play of an unknown force take place in the process of <u>becoming</u> — where either an acorn becomes a branched oak, or a crying infant becomes a St. Augustine, or lastly a world in the state of primordial mist becomes a planetary system with forms of living beings, ensouled beings and intelligent beings. Whatever it is in question — it does not matter if it is the growth of an organism, the development of an individual from birth to death, or cosmic evolution — it is necessary to postulate the existence of an active agent which effects the passage from the state of that which is only potential to one of reality. For <u>something has acted</u> during the time in which an acorn becomes an oak, or a fertilized egg becomes a mature man, or a primordial cosmic mist becomes a planetary system (including our globe inhabited by mankind). I know quite well that this reasoning is not in accordance with the rules of the game fixed by the natural sciences, but there are other rules — above all those of natural reasoning, with which this here is not only in agreement but which also is categorically demanded by them. Categorically — this means to say that one must either resign oneself to silence of thought with regard to problems of this order, or else reason in a way that conforms to the nature — to the <u>structural exigencies</u> — of the reasoning that is the rule of the game in Hermeticism.

It is necessary, therefore, to postulate a structural <u>agent</u> — of <u>growth</u>, just as it is necessary to postulate a "magical agent" acting as intermediary between consciousness and events, if one decides to think about it.

What is the intrinsic difference between the "magical agent" and the "agent of growth"? It is as follows.

The magical agent is of an <u>electrical</u> nature — either terrestrial or celestial. It is of a nature to act through discharges, through the emission of sparks or flashes. It is <u>dry and warm</u> — of the nature of <u>fire</u>. The "blasted Tower" of the XVIth Arcanum is in fact only the meeting of two "drynesses" — that of the Tower below and that of the Thunderbolt from above; and the Arcanum "The Devil" (Arcanum XV) is essentially that of "warmth" — moreover two "warmths", that of Evil and that of Good. The Arcana XV and XVI are therefore those of <u>Fire</u>, whilst the Arcana XIV and XVII are those of <u>Water</u>. For Angelic Inspiration and the "agent of growth" have this in common: that they <u>flow</u> — that they do not act through shocks and discharges, but in a <u>continuous</u> way.

<u>Continuous transformation</u> is the essential manifestation of the agent of growth, just as creative lightning is that of the magical agent.

These two "agents" manifest themselves everywhere, including the domain of human intellectuality. There are minds that have sided with Water, and it is to them that we owe the ideas of transformism: evolution, progress, education, natural therapy, living tradition, etc.; and there are others who have sided with Fire, to whom we owe the ideas of creationism: creation ex nihilo, invention, surgery and prosthesis, revolution, etc. Thales (ca. 625-547 B.C.) believed that it is the "agent of growth" or Water which plays the principal role in the world, whilst Heraclitus of Ephesus (flourished ca. 500 B.C.) attributed it to the "magical agent" or Fire.

GOETHE, in the "classical Walpurgis night" scene in part II of Faust, has Anaxagoras, a partisan of Fire, discuss with Thales, a partisan of Water, the theme of the priority of creative lightning or continuous transformation in Nature — a discussion which leads to the dramatic result of Anaxagoras' magical evocation of the threefold Moon (Diana, Luna and Hecate), which he regrets. Thus he throws himself down, face to the ground, imploring the flashing forces, which threaten irreparable catastrophe, to calm down. With respect to Thales, he invites Homunculus to a joyous maritime festival ("zum heitern Meeresfeste") — the festival of metamorphoses, the "ball" of transformism — where Thales cries out:

All things are out of water created,
All by water maintained. Thou Life-giving
Ocean, vouchsafe us thine agency ever!
(Goethe, "Faust" II)*

"Alles ist aus dem Wasser entsprungen
Alles wird durch das Wasser erhalten
Ozean, gönn uns dein ewiges Walten!"

It is not to be wondered at that Goethe, although he admits the reality of the "magical agent" or Fire, ranges himself on the side of the "agent of growth" or Water — for he was the author of four works on metamorphosis, the principal theme of his life, namely on the metamorphosis of light or color (Farbenlehre), on the metamorphosis of plants (Metamorphose der Pflanzen), on the metamorphosis of animals (Metamorphose der Tiere), and on the metamorphosis of man ("Faust"), which is his principal work. His faith was that of transformism, evolution, the tradition of cultural progress without revolution — in a word, Goethe believed in and attached value to all that flows, to all that grows without leaps and bounds. He ranged himself on the side of the principle of continuity.

The principle of continuity was portrayed in the intellectual domain in a particularly impressive and fruitful way by the German philosopher LEIBNITZ — who, moreover, wrote more in French and Latin than he did in German. Proceeding in his thought according to the principle of continuity, i.e. thinking without leaps and bounds, Leibnitz did not have to face the gulfs or abysses which separate one belief from another, or one thesis from another, or one human group from another. All theses are separated from their antitheses by abysses, but Leibnitz threw the bridge of the rainbow of continuity, i.e. gradual transition, across them. Just as red is transformed gradually into orange, and orange into yellow, which in its turn is transformed imperceptibly into green, in order still later to become blue, indigo and violet, so is every thesis transformed into its antithesis. Thus the thesis "each center of a particular existence ("m o n a d") is free" and the thesis "all is predetermined by the effective and final cause of the universe ("pre-established harmony")" co-existed in peace in the rainbow of the totality of Leibnitz's ideas on the world, although they are clearly contradictory. But for Leibnitz they were no more nor less contradictory than red and violet in the rainbow.

Platonism, Aristotelianism, Scholasticism, Cartesianism, Spinozism and mysticism were for Leibnitz only "colors" of the "rainbow" of the "Philosophia perennis" ("perennial Philosophy"), and in his thoughts he moved according to the "zodiacal" circle of thought.

His whole work was therefore that of peace, just as the work of Hermeticism is; for Leibnitz's method is nothing other than Hermeticism, pure and simple. And it was this "rainbow of peace" (the principle of continuity) which guided Leibnitz in his all-consuming activity, which aimed at two salient goals — the foundation of scientific academies, and the fusion of the Catholic and Reformed Churches.

The Berlin, St. Petersburg and Vienna scientific academies were the fruit of Leibnitz's efforts to introduce the "rainbow of peace" in its practical form of cooperation between scientists of all the different scientific disciplines in western civilization. With respect to the work of uniting the Catholic and Reformed Churches undertaken together with Bossuet, the intellectual and moral bridge that he built then still exists and there has been a considerable to-and-fro across it since that time — the time immediately following the Thirty Years' War!

It was again the principle of continuity, the "Water" of Hermeticism, which led Leibnitz to the discovery of the basis of differential calculus in mathematics. For differential calculus is simply the application of the principle of continuity — the fluidic mode of thought instead of crystallized thought — in the domain of mathematics. Infinitesimal calculus, comprising differential and integral calculus — the alpha and omega of thought-become-fluidic in mathematics — is an application of the principle of continuity. It is the fruit of the admission of the "agent of growth" into the domain of mathematics, where previously the principle

*Trsl. A.G. Latham, Everyman Library, London-New York, 1908, p.175

of construction reigned alone. I take the occasion to rescue from oblivion the work of a man that is probably either already forgotten or has not been noticed, i.e. the engineer SCHMAKOV's "The Sacred Book of THOTH — the Major Arcana of the Tarot" ("Svyashtchennaya Kniga Tota — Velikiye Arkany Taro"), published in Russia in 1916 or 1917 (in Russian) where on almost every page the author makes use of differential and integral calculus in dealing with such problems as the individuality and God, freedom and cosmic order, planes of existence and consciousness, spirit and matter etc. The author of the book (of 400 pages in octavo!) impressed me all the more profoundly as, in addition to the numerous formulas of infinitesimal calculus strewn throughout the book, he did not deign to translate — or even to transcribe in Latin or Cyrillic characters — long passages from the Zohar and other books in Hebrew or Aramaic. And this magnificent disdain for popularity was at a time when the populace became all-powerful and when demagogy was the order of the day! I should add that the book was large, printed in Cyrillic, Latin, Greek and Hebrew characters on the best paper, and that it was the author himself who published it at his own expense.

Yes, there have been noble stars in the heaven of Hermeticism — and I hope that this will always be so.

This tribute to a deceased Unknown Friend is not, however, without a contribution to the theme of this Letter, addressed to the living Unknown Friend. For the engineer Schmakov's contribution to the tradition of Hermeticism is a demonstration of the fruitfulness of the application of infinitesimal calculus in the domain where it belongs from right of birth — the domain of Hermeticism.

In enumerating the spirits who have grasped the Arcanum of the "agent of growth", I cannot pass by a great spirit, a star in the heaven of the Philosophia Perennis, whom you, dear Unknown Friend, certainly know without doubt. This is Henri BERGSON — again a Hermeticist by the grace of God alone, without any external affiliations with initiation orders or societies.

Henri Bergson had the courage and the talent to re-affirm, with its scientific consequences, the principle of continuity and the mode of thought which grasps movement by moving with it and not by arresting it. The following is what he says himself concerning this:-

> "If it is a question of movement, all the intelligence retains is a series of positions: first one point reached, then another, then still another. But should something happen between these points, immediately the understanding intercalates new positions, and so on indefinitely. It refuses to consider transition... Suppose we skip this intellectual representation of movement, which shows it as a series of positions. Let us go directly to movement and examine it without any interposed concept: we shall find it simple and all-of-a-piece. Let us go further; suppose we get it to coincide with one of those incontestably real and absolute movements which we ourselves produce. This time we have mobility in its essence, and we feel that it mingles with an effort whose duration is an indivisible continuity....
>
> We shall say as much for change; the understanding breaks it up into successive and distinct states, supposed to be invariable. If one looks a little more closely at each of these states, noticing that it varies, asking how it could endure if it did not change, the understanding hastens to replace it by a series of shorter states, which in their turn break up if necessary, and so forth ad infinitum. But how can we help seeing that the essence of duration is to flow, and that the fixed placed side by side with the fixed will never constitute anything which has duration. It is not the "states", simple snapshots we have taken once again along the course of change, that are real; on the contrary, it is flux, the continuity of transition, it is change itself that is real....
>
> What we have here is merely an uninterrupted thrust of change — of a change always adhering to itself in a duration which extends indefinitely." (Henri Bergson, "La pensée et le mouvement"; trsl. M.L. Andison in "The Creative Mind", New Jersey, 1965, pp.15-17)

Henri BERGSON therefore invites us to grasp the "agent of growth" in action instead of occupying

ourselves with its fossilized products — he invites us to experience what he calls "intuition". Amongst those who have given effect to the call and to the work of Henri Bergson, the most prominent is Father Teilhard de CHARDIN. Here is a summary of his life-work that we find on the last page of his diary, written on the 7th. April, 1955, three days before his death:-

"Maundy Thursday What I b e l i e v e.

1) Saint Paul the three verses: En pasi panta Theos.

2) Cosmos = Cosmogenesis → Biogenesis → Noogenesis → Christogenesis.

The 2 articles of my C r e e d

3) { The Universe is centrated — Evolutively { Upward / Forward
   { Christ is its Center { The Christian Phenomenon
   { Noogenesis = Christogenesis
   { (= PAUL) "

The three verses are from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians :-

" The last enemy to be destroyed is Death. For he (the Christ) has put all things in subjection under his feet... When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to everyone (en pasi panta Theos)" (I Corinthians xv, 26-28). (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "The Future of Man"; trsl. N. Denny, London, 1964, p. 309)

Just as there is Fire and fire, i.e. the celestial Fire of divine love and the fire of electricity due to friction, so there is also Water and water, i.e. the celestial Water of the sap of growth, progress and evolution and the lower water of instinctivity — the "collective unconscious", engulfing collectivity — which is the water of floods and drowning. Thus, the woman represented on the Card of the XVIIth Arcanum pours water from two vases — held in her left and right hands — which blend into the same stream.

Which blend into the same stream, alas! Here is the tragedy of human life and mankind's history and cosmic evolution. The flow of continuity — in heredity, tradition and, lastly, evolution — bears not only all that which is healthy, noble, holy and divine of the past but also all that which was infectious, vile, blasphemous and diabolical. All is borne pell-mell, never ending, towards the future. What Verlaine said of the river Seine in his "Poēmes Saturniens" —

"Still, Seine, your crawling journey do you make,
Curving through Paris like some aged snake,
A muddy snake.* And all your ports are fed
With loads of wood, of coal and of the dead!"

("Et tu coules toujours, Seine, et, tout en rampant,
Tu traînes dans Paris ton cours de vieux serpent,
De vieux serpent boueux, emportant vers tes havres
Tes cargaisons de bois, de houille et de cadavres!")

(Paul Verlaine, "Paris: A Nocturne")**

— could also be said — with good reason — of the flow of human life, mankind's history and cosmic evolution. The same again could be said — also with good reason — in the words of Victor HUGO:-

* The mud of the serpent of old.

** From "Poèmes Saturniens"; trsl. B. Hill, "The Sky Above the Roof", London, 1957, p. 37

"As a river of the communal soul,
From the white pylon to the rough rune,
From the Brahmin to the Roman Flamen,
From the hierophant to the Druid,
A kind of godly fluid
Runs through the veins of the human race."

("Comme un fleuve d'âme commune,
Du blanc pylône à l'âpre rune,
Du brahme au Flamine romaine,
De l'hierophant au druide,
Une sorte de Dieu fluide
Coule aux veines du genre humain.")

(Victor Hugo, "Les mages", 435-440, from the collection "Les contemplations")

For both the "mud of the serpent of old" and "a kind of godly fluid" indeed flow in the veins of the human race.

Is this dualism, then? Do the Serpent's venom and the tears of the Virgin therefore flow together eternally in the Flow of Life?

Yes and no — the one as resolutely as the other. Yes for the present, which is action and will; no for the future, which is the star of the sea of understanding and hope.

Because for action it is dualism which awakens the will and makes it pass from a passive state to an active state — all effort presupposes a practical and concrete dualism. The great masters of dualism in the history of humanity such as Zarathustra, Buddha and Mani did not want to explain the world through the dogma of cosmic duality (Zarathustra), or psychological duality (Buddha), or even psycho-cosmic duality (Mani), but rather they wanted to awaken dormant will for the effort which manifests itself by the power to say Yes and No. Fatalism, resignation to routine, and quietism are the sleep of the will — sometimes harmless, at other times tinged with bitterness. The great masters of dualism made appeal to the will to awaken it and rid it of the weight of somnolence. They wanted to give courage and boldness to the point of exercising in practice the will's birthright — that of choice, that of saying Yes and No. The great Zarathustra wanted knights to fight under the banner of Light in the struggle against Darkness — the Turanian idolaters, the demons of impurity and ignorance, and lastly the spirit of Ahriman. He wanted that there should be people able to say Yes to the light — and who, consequently, learned to say No to the darkness.

The great Buddha wanted to awaken the will to say No to the great routine of desires which make the wheel of births revolve. He wanted ascetics with regard to the automatic mechanism of the psyche, who would learn to say Yes with regard to the free creativity of the spirit.

The great Mani, who taught a synthesis of the teachings of Zarathustra and Buddha within Christianity, wanted (leaving aside the question of whether the blend that he accomplished was good or not) to mobilize the good will of the whole of mankind — Pagan, Buddhist and Christian — for a single concerted and universal effort of Yes towards the eternal spirit and No towards the transitory things of matter.

The aim which the great masters of dualism pursued was practical, i.e. relating to the domain of Yes and No. And we, in so far as we pursue a practical earthly psychic or spiritual aim, cannot accept the flow of human life, mankind's history and cosmic evolution simply as it is and let ourselves be carried along by it. We are bound to distinguish here between the "mud of the serpent of old" and "a kind of godly fluid", and to say Yes and No — with all the practical consequences that this Yes and this No entail.

At the same time we must not forget that the XVIIth Arcanum is not only that of the water which flows from two vases and is mixed in a single flow but also that of the star — all the more so as the traditional name of the Card is "The Star".

The great central star of the Card — as, moreover, the whole constellation of eight stars — invites us to an effort of consciousness to unite contemplative justice (the yellow star with eight rays) with active justice (the red star with eight rays), to unite the guiding principle of understanding with the guiding principle of the will. In other words, it invites us to overcome dualism through the magical

and alchemical operation of nailing opposites to one another — that which one calls the "marriage of opposites". The "marriage of opposites" makes that light-force radiate into the world which renders the future not only acceptable but also desirable, which transforms the future into Promise, and which is the antithesis of the thesis of the author of Ecclesiastes, the son of David, king of Jerusalem, who said: "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes i, 9).

The light-force which emanates from the star — constituted through the marriage of contemplation with activity, and which is the antithesis of the thesis: there is nothing new under the sun — is Hope. It proclaims to the world:- "What has been is that which prepares that which will be, and that which has been done prepares what will be done; there is only that which is new under the sun. Each day is a unique event and revelation which will never be repeated."

H o p e is not something subjective due to an optimistic or sanguine temperament, or to a desire for compensation in the sense of modern Freudian and Adlerian psychology. It is a light-force which radiates objectively and which directs creative evolution towards the world's future. It is the celestial and spiritual counterpart of the terrestrial and natural instinct of biological reproduction — which, with mutation, produces natural selection, which latter, in its turn, produces, with time, biological progress. In other words, Hope is what moves and directs spiritual evolution in the world — and in so far as it moves, it is an objective force, and in so far as it orientates and directs, it is a subjective light. This is why we may speak of it as a "light-force".

Hope is for spiritual evolution what the instinct of reproduction is for biological evolution. It is the force and the light of the final cause of the world or, if you wish, the force and the light of the Ideal of the world — the magical radiation of the "Omega point", according to Teilhard de Chardin. This "Omega Point" towards which spiritual evolution is tending — or that of the "noosphere", which surges triumphantly above the "barysphere" and "biosphere" — is the central point of the hope of the "personalizing world"; it is the point of complete unity of the outer and inner, of matter and spirit — i.e. the God-Man or the resurrected Jesus Christ, just as the Alpha Point, the prime mover or the effective cause, is the Word which set in motion electrons, atoms, molecules — movement directed towards their association into planets, organisms, families, races, kingdoms . . . .

"I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Revelation xxi, 6) — this is how the message of the central Star of the Card of the XVIIth Arcanum of the Tarot reads. This means to say: I am Activity, the effective cause, who set all in motion; and I am Contemplation, the final cause, who draws towards himself all that which is in movement. I am primordial Action; and I am eternal Waiting for all to arrive where I am.

Here is why we say n o to dualism seen in the light of the future, just as we say y e s to it if we are looking at it in the light of the present. It is Hope, the fruit of the marriage of opposites, which defends dualism for us and which not only invites us to believe in the final unity of opposites but also to work with a view to the realization of this unity — which is the sense and the aim of the spiritual exercise which is the XVIIth Arcanum of the Tarot. For it has to be said yet again: the Major Arcana of the Tarot are spiritual exercises whose practice alone teaches the "arcanum" (that which one needs to know in order to make discoveries) of each Arcanum.

Now, the spiritual exercise of the XVIIth Arcanum is that of the endeavor "to see together", to con-template, the essence of biological growth and the essence of spiritual growth — the "agent of growth" and Hope — in order to find, or rather re-find, their analogy, their intrinsic kinship and, lastly, their fundamental identity. For it is a matter of grasping the essence of the Water which flows both in the obscure process of growth, multiplication and continuity in biological reproduction and

in the clarity of the serene heights of Hope. It is a matter, therefore, of coming to an intuition of Water such as it is understood in Moses' account of the second day of creation, where God "separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament", and of comprehending (com-prehending) that the light which flows above consciousness and the instinctive drive which flows beneath consciousness are fundamentally the same thing — separated in order to act according to two different modes — namely Water, which is the principle of growth and evolution, both biological and spiritual. Thus, it is necessary to attain to an intuitive perception, i.e. immediate and endowed with the certainty of obviousness, that the principle of fluid-sap, bearing the "agent of growth", and the principle of Hope — in the belief in the transformability of things and in their transformation in conformity with their divine prototypes —, bearing spiritual evolution, are one and the same: namely the principle of Water, although the latter principle acts in the sphere situated above consciousness, and the former — in the sphere situated below it.

This is why the Card of the XVIIth Arcanum of the Tarot represents the Woman, the maternal principle, between the constellation of Hope above her and the flow of continuity of biological life beneath her. Because every mother professes a double faith — the faith of celestial Hope that the future will be more glorious than the present and the faith of terrestrial continuity that the flow of succeeding generations will go forward — in the direction indicated by Hope from above. Every mother knows — in so far as she is a mother — that underlying the flow of generations there is at work the primordial magical impulse of the effective Cause, the Alpha, of the world and that the final Cause, the Omega, of the world will not fail to direct it and draw it towards itself. In other words: each mother professes, by the very fact that she is a mother, the divine origin of the world and the divine aim of the world. If this were not so, she would refuse to give birth, i.e. to give birth to children who otherwise would be destined to be the victims of absurdity. Therefore, we could also name the XVIIth Arcanum the "Arcanum of the Mother" or the "Arcanum of E v e"; in her is actively present the simultaneous intuition of celestial Hope and of the "primordial magic of the benediction of the Creator ("be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it")".

The ancients drew hope for life and for death in the mysteries of the Mother. I have in mind not only the mysteries of Eleusis but also a number of others, including those of Isis in Egypt. But one finds the essence of all these mysteries of the Mother expressed in the Epistle to the Romans of the Apostle PAUL:-

> "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility — not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it — in the hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been suffering the pangs of childbirth until now" (Romans viii, 19-23)

Here is not only the soul of all the ancient mysteries of the Mother but also of all modern doctrines of transformism and biological and spiritual evolution! For modern evolutionism is, at root, only the renaissance in a scientific guise of the ancient mysteries of the Mother — the mysteries of Hope and of the pangs of childbirth. The mysteries of the Father contain the w h a t — salvation through the Son; and the mysteries of the Mother — the h o w — biological and spiritual evolution. Now, natural science is orientated towards the how of the world, and for this reason is on the way towards renewing the ancient mysteries of the Mother — knowledge of Evolution; whilst the Christian religion is in the first place orientated towards the mysteries of the Father — salvation through the Son. It is to Teilhard de Chardin, a hermeticist of our time, by the grace of God, that we owe the synthesis — or at least a way towards synthesis — of the What and

the How of the world, i.e. of Religion and Science, which is the task and the mission of Hermeticism. Henceforth everyone can contemplate the Serpent of evolution crucified on the cross of Divine Providence and the Son of God crucified on the cross of evolution of the Serpent — and from thence draw Hope for life and death. Here evolution and Salvation — the two truths of Science and Religion — are no longer contradictory: they bear together the message of Hope.

But let us not forget that this synthesis has had its history, and that this is due also to many "pangs of childbirth". It was born after a long series of continuous endeavors from century to century: the endeavor of HERACLITUS, the philosopher of the perpetual change of matter; that of the Gnostics, who made the drama of the fall and return of Sophia Achamoth resound in human history; that of Saint Augustine, the father of the philosophy of history, who brought to light the twofold current in mankind's history — that of the "terrestrial City" and that of the "City of God"; that of the Hermetic-alchemistic thinkers who affirmed and re-affirmed untiringly the principle of transformability of that which is base into that which is noble; that of Martinez de PASQUALLY, who wrote his "Traité de la Réintégration des êtres" ("Treatise on the Reintegration of Beings"); that of Fabre d'OLIVET, the author of "L'Histoire Philosophique du genre humain" ("Philosophical History of the Human Race"), showing the dynamic operation of the triangle Fate-Freedom-Providence in mankind's history; that of H.P. BLAVATSKY, who added and opposed to Charles DARWIN's materialistic evolution a breath-taking vision of the spiritual evolution of the universe; that of Rudolf STEINER, who set in relief the center of gravity of spiritual-cosmic evolution — namely, Jesus-C h r i s t — from where it is but a short step to the "Omega Point" of Teilhard de CHARDIN — all these endeavors have contributed — in a visible or invisible manner — to the synthesis of today. They live, all together, in the contemporary synthesis of Evolution and Salvation, which is the fruit of this collective endeavor from century to century.

Truly, "from the fusion of opinions truth shines forth". Because it is not the collision of opinions to which this synthesis is due, but rather to their fusion as constituent elements of the "rainbow" of peace.

The synthesis of the truths of Salvation and Evolution is in fact a rainbow in which the immortal essences of the endeavors of the past are resplendent — purified of the temporary and accidental which has enveloped them. The modern "transformism" of biological and spiritual Evolution is not due to a refutation of ancient and medieval alchemy, for example, but rather to the fact that the fundamental alchemical dogma of transmutability has been embraced by contemporary thinkers. Purified of temporary and accidental elements — like the orientation towards the aim of producing material gold, a material philosopher's stone and a material panacea — alchemy today celebrates its apotheosis in the splendor of the rainbow of the synthesis of Salvation and Evolution. Today alchemy has come out of the sombre alchemical kitchens where its adepts often lavished entire fortunes and the flower of their lives — in order to be installed in a laboratory more worthy of it: the vast extent of the universe. Now, it is the world which has become the alchemical laboratory, just as it has become the mystical oratory. Is this a loss or a gain for alchemy? Is it a loss or a gain for alchemy that it has ceased to be the secret — often maniacal — occupation of a sect, and that it has become the "prince of ideas" for mankind? What has become of the secret art of the transmutation of metals, the manufacture of the philosopher's stone and the preparation of the panacea — everyone's light of Hope for a synthesis between

the Salvation of souls and cosmic Evolution?

The answer is apparent: today we are witnesses of the triumph of alchemy — an unparalleled triumph, surpassing the most rash hopes of the past.

What is true for alchemy is also true of the Augustinian philosophy of history. The cross of the "terrestrial city" and the "city of God" that St. Augustine saw especially in the history of Israel and the Roman empire has today been transformed, whilst preserving its immortal essence, into the cross of Salvation and Evolution, that of Religion and Science — in the last analysis, the cross of O r a et L a b o r a, of Grace and Effort.

The Augustinian vision therefore also lives in the rainbow of the modern synthesis of Salvation and Evolution.

And what is true of alchemy and of St. Augustine is also true of all other contributions — ancient, medieval and modern — to the synthesis of Salvation and Evolution. The work of all those who taught a <u>way</u> — the mystical and spiritual way of purification, illumination and union, or the historical and social way of the progress of civilization through social and moral justice, or the biological way of evolution from the sphere of chemical elements to the sphere of living organisms and from the sphere of living organisms to that of beings endowed with thought and word — the work of all these, I say, which teaches us a <u>way</u> of individual and collective perfection, is now resplendent in the rainbow of the synthesis of Salvation and Evolution, the rainbow of mankind's Hope.

Because this rainbow, this Tradition in full flower; it is living tradition which has attained a certain degree of brilliancy. For this reason, let us also not forget the poet, for

"it is he who, in spite of thorns,
Envy and derision,
Walks, bent under your remains,
Gathering <u>tradition</u>.
From fertile tradition
Comes all that covers the world,
Everything that heaven can bless.
<u>Every idea, human or divine,</u>
<u>Which is rooted in the past,</u>
<u>Has its foliage in the future.</u>"

("c'est lui qui, malgré les épines,
L'envie et la dérision,
Marche, courbé dans vos ruines,
Ramassant la <u>tradition</u>.
De la tradition féconde
Sort tout ce que couvre le monde,
Tout ce que le ciel peut bénir.
<u>Toute idée, humaine ou divine,</u>
<u>Qui prend le passé pour racine</u>
<u>A pour feuillage l'avenir.</u>")

(Victor HUGO, "Les rayons et les ombres", the poem "Fonction du poëte", 287-296)

One cannot pass by poetry if one attaches value to Tradition. The whole of the Bible breathes poetry — epic, lyric and dramatic — and likewise the Zohar is full of poetry.

The principal works of St. John of the Cross are simply commentaries on some pieces of poetry written by him. A poetic impetus vibrates in the whole work of Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, of a kind that his critics — as I understood from a conversation with one of them — see in it a weakness that is reprehensible from a scientific, philosophical and theological point of view. But they are mistaken, since poetry is élan and élan gives wings to the imagination, and without winged imagination — directed and controlled by the strict laws of intrinsic coherence and conformity to facts — no progress is possible. One cannot pass by poetry, because one cannot do without the élan of imagination. One should only be on guard that one is not carried away by an imagination which

seeks brilliance and not truth. With respect to an imagination that loves truth, i.e. which loves and seeks only what is coherence and in conformity with facts, it is what we name "genius" or fruitfulness in the domain of human endeavor.

Hermeticism, also, cannot pass by poetry. What is the Emerald Table of Hermes Trismegistus if not a piece of sublime poetry. Certainly, it is not "only poetry" in the pure and simple sense of verbal and musical aesthetics, since it advances a great mystical, gnostic, magical and alchemical dogma, but no more is it a discursive treatise in prose. It is a song of truth concerning three worlds.

And the Major Arcana of the Tarot? Are they not a call to the winged imagination, within a framework and in a direction proper to each of them?

They are symbols. But what does one do with symbols if not apply the inspired imagination to them, directed towards their meaning via a will obedient to the laws of intrinsic coherence and in conformity with outward and inward — material and spiritual — facts of experience?

Now, poetry is not simply a question of taste, but rather one of fertility or sterility of the spirit. Without a poetic vein there can be no access to the life of the Hermetic tradition.

Let us therefore love poetry and respect the poets. For it is not dukes, margraves and counts who constitute the true nobility of mankind, but rather the poets. One is noble (in the sense of the nobility of the heart) only in so far as one is a poet at heart. And since every human soul is in principle a priest, a nobleman and a worker at one and the same time, let us not smother the nobility within us by an overestimation of practical aims or by a preoccupation with our salvation, but on the contrary let us ennoble our work and our religion by bringing in the breath of poetic inspiration. This will in no way adulterate the functions of priest and worker. The prophets of Israel were great poets, and the song of St. Paul concerning love (caritas) is a work of poetry which has yet to be surpassed. With respect to work, there is joy in it only in so far as it is elevated above the spirit of slavery by participating in the poetic élan of the great Human Endeavor (grandiose Effort Humain).

— Be that as it may, we are bound to make a case concerning the problem of poetry under the title of the XVIIth Arcanum of the Tarot — the Arcanum of Water above and beneath the firmament: the Arcanum of Hope and Continuity. For poetry is the union of the upper waters and the lower waters on the second day of creation. The poet is the point at which the separated waters meet and where the flow of Hope and that of Continuity converge.

It is when the circulation of the human blood, which bears Continuity, and the radiation of Hope, which is the blood of the spiritual world and of all the celestial hierarchies, meet, unite and begin to vibrate together that the poetic experience takes place. Poetic inspiration is the union of blood from above — Hope — and blood from below — Continuity.

This is why it is necessary to be <u>incarnated</u>, i.e. to have the pulsation of warm earthly blood, in order to be able to create poetic works — and not only poetic works of subjective significance (<u>setrams</u>) but also those of objective significance (<u>mantrams</u>). It was necessary to be immersed in warm human blood, i.e. to be incarnated, and to rise above it by uniting with the luminous blood of Heaven, i.e. with Hope, in order that the Psalms of David, for example, could be born. It was not in Heaven, but rather on earth, that the Psalms of David came to birth. And once born, they became an arsenal of magical mantrams not only on earth but also in Heaven. Because the mantrams — or magical formulas — of the Psalms are in use as such not only amongst beings with warm blood — human beings — but also amongst beings with luminous blood — entities from the celestial hierarchies.

Mantrams — Formulas of magical significance in the three worlds — are born from the marriage of Warmth and Light: from earthly blood, the bearer of Continuity, and from celestial blood, the bearer of Hope.

On the other hand, every human word can become magical if it is sincere to the point of engaging the blood, and if at the same time it is filled by faith to the point of setting the luminous waters of Hope from above in motion. The "great cry" uttered by Jesus Christ on the Cross when he gave up the spirit (cf. Matthew and Mark) was followed by trembling of the earth — "the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened..." — for this cry bore simultaneously the magic of the last drop of human blood shed and the whole ocean of the world's Hope.

Therefore, it follows from the preceding that magical formulas are not invented — just as true poetry is not invented — but that they are <u>born</u> from blood and light. This is why one uses in sacred Magic, as a rule, traditional formulas — and this not because they are ancient, but rather because they took birth in the above-indicated manner and they have proved themselves as such. This was well known to Martinez de PASQUALLY, for example. The rituals of his magical invocations consist only of traditional formulas, drawn above all from the Psalms. And this was not because he was a practicing Catholic but solely in view of their magical effectiveness (in the magic that he taught and practiced.)

Sacred Magic differs from "arbitrary or personal magic" — beyond the differences which we have stated in the 3rd Letter — also in that it "makes use" of the "agent of growth", whilst "arbitrary magic" works above all with the "magical agent" of electrical nature.

Now, it is to these two "agents" that the following passage from the Sermon on the Mount relates:

> "Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old: You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn. But I say to you: Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply "Yes" or "No"; anything more than this comes from evil." (Matthew v, 33-37)

For "to swear" includes all categories of magical acts designed to magically reinforce a simple promise or decision of the human will made within the limits of its competence, i.e. within the limits of "yes or no". The desire to go beyond these limits by evoking the aid of forces from beyond the precise circle of the will's competence, so as to render it more powerful by arranging to this end a dynamic mechanism that will serve it, necessarily makes appeal to the electrical forces of the Serpent, of "evil".

"To swear" is therefore a characteristic act representing the whole domain of "arbitrary or personal magic", where it is a matter of rendering a personal will more powerful by reinforcing it through forces of an electric nature — flashing forth like lightning and acting through discharges — coming from beyond the will and submitting to its domination.

Now, the quoted passage says that Reality is shielded from arbitrary human will — Heaven and Earth being assigned to God, Jerusalem being assigned to another individuality — that of the great King, and the head (the body proper) being reserved for the "agent of growth",

which is removed from human arbitrariness ("for you cannot make one hair white or black"). Heaven, Earth, Jerusalem and the head are not only removed from human arbitrariness but also from that of the Serpent — from the electrical force due to friction and conflict. It is not the "magical agent" which rules Reality – Heaven, Earth, Jerusalem and the head — but rather another "agent" which serves only God and his servants – "the great King". Now, this other "agent" — this "agent" removed from human arbitrariness and from the arbitrariness of the Serpent — is what we have designated as the "agent of growth"; and it is this which is the "agent" of sacred or divine Magic.

And here we have the whole problem of the difference between "magical phenomena" and "miracles", between what "personal or arbitrary magic" realizes and what sacred or divine Magic accomplishes. Although this problem has been treated under the title of the IIIrd Major Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Empress", it is presented anew here, i.e. under the title of the XVIIth Arcanum, in a new and special aspect. For the problem of personal magic and divine magic was presented in the meditation on the IIIrd Arcanum above all from the aspect of the <u>author</u>, the source of the initiative of the magical operation — either personal or divine — whilst the same problem is presented now under the aspect of the <u>agent</u>, the active means of this operation.

Now, the agent of divine Magic is essentially removed from the human personal will, whilst that of personal magic is not. It is the "agent of growth" which is used as instrument in divine Magic; and it is therefore the dynamic means of <u>miracles</u>, if we understand by "miracle" the effect of the action of a force which is essentially and entirely removed from human personal will, but which is at the same time not indifferent towards the moral qualities of the aspirations of the human personal will — and can lend it a power of realization higher than the forces of physical, biological, psychological and intellectual determinism, i.e. beyond natural, psychic and intellectual "laws". Divine Magic is therefore the moral consciousness which <u>invokes</u> the help of higher moral consciousness, which latter answers this invocation by setting in motion the "agent of growth" — the lower waters of Life and the higher waters of Hope. And everywhere where Hope and Continuity act together in reply to the moral evocation of the human will, a miracle takes place. A miracle is the descent of Hope — the higher "waters above the firmament", into the domain of Continuity — the lower "waters beneath the Firmament" — and the action of the two "waters" united.

Neither science nor personal or arbitrary magic can perform miracles. Only a series of determinisms (or "laws"), one against another, are set in play, e.g. wind moves the water, warmth moves the air, electricity produces warmth. Now, science supplies itself with mechanical movement by means of warmth and electricity. It effects the conversion of electricity into warmth and warmth into mechanical movement. In the act of knowledge, science proceeds from the visible movement to its invisible causes; and in the act of realization, it proceeds from the invisible forces to their visible movement. The research thus pursued led to the discovery of nuclear energy. The electrons, protons, neutrons, etc. of nuclear atoms are invisible, but a nuclear explosion is certainly visible.

Here, therefore, is the circle of Science: ascending from the visible to the invisible in

theory, and descending from the invisible to the visible in practice. It is the ancient symbol of the Serpent which bites its tail:-

Because this circle is closed — not in the sense of the circle's dimension, since it can grow indefinitely, but rather in the sense that it is and always will be a circle without opening (in contrast to the spiral, which is an "open circle"). The forces of warmth, magnetism, electricity and nuclear forces are thus discovered — and a series of other forces, more hidden and still more subtle, can be discovered — but only forces are discovered, i.e. the causes of mechanical movement. It is in that this circle is closed that it is why — without intervention from outside of it, such as that of Teilhard de Chardin — it is a prison and captivity for the spirit.

What is true of natural Science is also true of personal or arbitrary magic. The latter proceeds exactly as the former — ascending in theory and descending in practice. Modern authors on magic are perfectly right in advancing the thesis that magic is a science and that it has nothing to do with miracles as such.

"Magic is the study and practice of the control of Nature's secret forces. It is a science — pure, or dangerous — like all sciences..."

says PAPUS in the introduction to his "Traité méthodique de Magie pratique" (Paris, 1970, p. v). We have to add here only that this is true, and also that "Nature's secret forces" are secret only for a limited time, notably until their discovery by natural science — which simply discovers and renders controllable the "secret forces" of Nature one after the other. It is therefore only a question of time until the pursuit of Magic and that of natural Science coincide and become identical.

But, on the other hand, it is also true that the closed circle of science, which is a prison and captivity for the spirit, applies also to personal Magic. Magic, in so far as it is a science — and it is one — has the same fate as science: captivity in a closed circle.

And when Papus says further on in the introduction to his "Traité méthodique de Magie pratique" that "Magic, we could say, is the materialism of the future knights of Christ.." (p. vi), he admits with this statement the captivity of Magic as such — in a closed circle of a single aspect of the world, which he names "materialism", and he gives expression to his hope that in the future there will be an intervention from beyond this circle by future magicians ("knights of Christ"). In other words, that future Teilhard de Chardins will do for Magic what he has done for science: that they will open the closed circle and transform it into a spiral.

When Louis-Claude de SAINT-MARTIN left the circle of disciples of Martinez de PASQUALLY, who were practicing ceremonial magic, and abandoned the practice of this magic — without denying the effectiveness of its capacity for realization — in order to embrace Jacob BOEHME's kind of mysticism and gnosis, it was because he sensed that ceremonial magic is a closed circle, whilst he aspired to unlimited qualitative perfection, i.e. to God. For even if the supreme aim of the invocations of the ceremonial magic of Martinez de Pasqually had been realized, even if there had been success in the realization of a "pass" at which the resurrected Jesus CHRIST would have appeared, it would have been a matter only of a "pass" with a phenomenal apparition rather than an immediate and certain revelation of the essence of Christ within the human soul. The circle of this type of magic, however sublime its aim may be, is closed in that it is always a matter of apparitions through "passes". But Saint-Martin had hunger and thirst for intuitive

union — soul with soul, spirit with spirit — and nothing less than this could satisfy him. He says in his "Mon portrait historique et philosophique" ("My Philosophical and Historical Portrait"):

> "There are people who are condemned to time. There are those who are condemned (or called) to eternity. I know someone of this latter kind; and when those who are condemned to time would wish to judge his eternity and govern him by the scepter of their times, one may presume how they will treat him." (Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, "Mon portrait historique et philosophique, 1789-1803", para. 1023, Paris, 1961, p. 411)

Being sentenced (or called) to eternity, Saint-Martin could not be content with that which is passing — including every "pass" realized by means of ceremonial magic. This is why he turned to the gnostic mysticism or mystical gnosis of Jacob BOEHME.

> "On the 9th day of the month of Brumaire (=November, 1800), I published my translation of Jacob Boehme's L'Aurora naissante. I felt in subsequently re-reading it at my leisure that this work is blessed by God and man, except for the whirlwind of the butterflies of this world, who will see nothing in it, or who will only make it the object of their criticism and sarcasm." (op. cit., para. 1013)

he says concerning this book of Jacob Boehme, at the same time giving expression to his appreciation of Boehme's whole work: that it is "blessed by God and man". Elsewhere, concerning Boehme's work, he says: "I would have been suffering and unhappy far too long if God had made known to me much sooner the things that he has acquainted me with now, thanks to the fruits born in me from the fertile foundations of my friend B. (= Boehme). This is why these magnificent gifts were deferred for so long." (op. cit., para. 902)

Now, the "magnificent gifts" of which it is a matter here are not magical phenomena but rather revelations in the inner life of intuition and inspiration.

In returning to the problem of the difference between magical phenomena and miracles, it should be said that the former fall under the heading of human scientific knowledge and power, whilst the latter fall under that of divine Knowledge and Power — which means to say that conscious human participation in the miracles of sacred Magic begins with mysticism, proceeds to gnosis and results in miracles, i.e. in practical sacred Magic: e x D e o, i n D e o, p e r D e u m ("from God, in God, through God"). It was the way "ex Deo, in Deo, per Deum" which was Saint-Martin's inner vocation, and this is why he could not be content with the way "e x h o m i n e, i n h o m i n e, a d D e u m" ("from man, in man, towards God") — the way of the most noble kind of ceremonial magic of his time: that of the school of Martinez de Pasqually. Saint-Martin, in leaving the closed circle of this school, nevertheless remained grateful for the experience that he had had there and kept his veneration for the master of this school. He said of him:-

> "If Martinez de Pasqually, who was the master for each one of us, had wanted to know me, he would have led me in another way than he did, and he would have made another person of me, though, nevertheless, I have an inexpressible moral obligation to him, and I thank God every day for having allowed me to participate — although only in a small measure — in the light of this extraordinary man who, of all the people I know, has been the only living person whom I could not have bypassed." (op. cit., para. 167)

It is thus that for Saint-Martin the circle of Martinez de Pasqually — a prison in so far as being a closed circle — played the role of the first circle of a spiral. And in having sought and found the way out, he could not see it otherwise than as the first step of an "infinite spiral"

in which he was engaged.

Having sought and found the way out... Was the circle of ceremonial magic of the school of Martinez de Pasqually therefore not closed, since Saint-Martin could leave it?

The circle of ceremonial magic — just like that of science — is closed in principle, but every individual human soul can leave it by embracing a more elevated ideal and by renouncing all the advantages that the circle offers him. This is an important aspect of the meaning of the formula of Christ:- "I a m t h e d o o r" — namely, that there is an exit from every closed circle, from all captivity of the spirit. "I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John x, 9), which means to say that if someone is moved by love of God and neighbor, he can enter each closed circle and he can leave it. Instead of prisons he will "find pasture", i.e. he will move in a spiral. It is thus, for example, that Teilhard de Chardin could enter the closed circle of science without being captured, and he could leave this circle by transforming it into a spiral. It is thus, also, that Saint-Martin could enter the closed circle of ceremonial magic without being captured by it, and he could also leave it by transforming it into a spiral.

The spiral: this is the Good News, the Gospel, to all those in captivity in closed circles. Jesus Christ said to Nathanael:

> Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these... Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. (John i, 50-51)

"Heaven opened" — this is the way of the spiral into the infinite — which opens.

The spiral is the arcanum of growth — both spiritual and biological. A plant grows following the movement of a spiral; an idea, a problem, likewise grows following the movement of a spiral. Not only the branches of a tree are found arranged according to the spiral, but also the so-called "tree-ring" circles, which are formed each year between the bark and the center of the trunk of the tree, constitute traces or effects of the operation of circular growth in two dimensions — vertical and horizontal — at the same time, i.e. proceeding in a spiral. With respect to ideas and problems, they grow in human consciousness through a series of "expansions" and "contractions", i.e. through concentric circles, similar to tree-rings on the trunk of a tree, crossing in two directions — in breadth and height. Thus it was in 1919/20 that I was for the first time occupied with the Major Arcana of the Tarot under the four aspects comprising the divine name יהוה (YOD-HÉ-VAV-HÉ), which then were presented to me as a unity comprising Nature, Man and Heaven, or Alchemy, ethical Hermeticism and Astrology — united in Theurgy. Now, after returning to this theme a number of times, the present Meditations on the Tarot also deal with the four aspects which comprise the divine name יהוה, but they now already present themselves as the unity of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic in Hermeticism. This is therefore an example of the growth of ideas and problems — taking place in a spiral in two dimensions.

Or, consider the history of the work of preparation for the coming of Christ. The Gospel according to Matthew summarizes it in the guise of the genealogy of Jesus Christ which, in its turn, he summarizes with a single phrase as follows:

> "So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations." (Matthew i, 17)

Here is the spiral of the history of the preparation for the coming of Christ — a spiral of three circles or "steps", each step being fourteen generations. The first circle or "step" of the spiral is that where the threefold imprint of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — an imprint from above which corresponds to the sacrament of baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit — made possible the revelation on Mt. Sinai and the act of alliance that took place there, and resulted in the Law (Torah) becoming soul in a human personality — in that of David. For it was in David that the commandments and ordinances of the Law — revealed with "thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain... so that all the people trembled" (Exodus xix,16) — became interiorized to the point of becoming love and conscience, the concern of a heart enamored of their truth and beauty. The Law became soul in David; and this is why his transgressions, also, gave rise to the birth in the soul of a new force — that of inner penitence.

The first "step" of the spiral, the fourteen generations from Abraham to David, therefore corresponds to the process of interiorization which takes place from the sacrament of <u>baptism</u> (the three patriarchs), through the sacrament of <u>confirmation</u> (the alliance of the Sinai desert), to the sacrament of <u>penance</u>.

The second circle or "step" of the spiral, the fourteen generations from David to the deportation to Babylon, is the "school of David" — the school of inner penitence — which resulted in its outward aim — that of <u>expiation</u>, i.e. the deportation to Babylon.

The third circle or "step" of the spiral, the fourteen generations from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ, corresponds to that which takes places spiritually between the last act of the sacrament of penance — absolution, and the <u>sacrament of Holy Communion</u> or the <u>Eucharist</u> — that of the presence and reception of Christ.

John the Baptist "prepared the way of the Lord and made his paths straight" by repeating — in abridged form — the entire history of the preparation of the coming of Christ, i.e. the way of penitence which was his "baptism by water". For the "son of David" was the "son of penitence" on his father's side — Joseph, and the "son of innocence" on his mother's side — Mary. As Jesus Christ could not come into another milieu than that of virginal innocence and innocence recovered through penitence, John the Baptist is therefore the one who — in the history of the world — accomplished the act of transition from penitence to communion; it is he who led by the hand the first penitent from the ancient world to the altar of grace of the new world. This moment of immense significance could not be more concisely described than in the Gospel according to John:

> "The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said: Behold, the Lamb of God! The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them: What do you seek? And they said to him: Master, where are you staying? He said to them: Come and see. They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour." (John i, 35-39)

It was thus that John the Baptist transmitted the fruit of the world which had come to an end to the world which was beginning. If the three holy Kings (Magi) laid at the feet of the child Jesus the threefold quintessence of what the ancient world had achieved — "gold, frankincense and myrrh", St. John the Baptist gave the Master a fourth gift — the pure heart which could see the Divine ("Behold, the Lamb of God"), of which the Master was to say: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God".

Three times fourteen generations is therefore the spiral of the three steps of the way from Abraham to Christ, just as the ages of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh were the three steps of the spiral of mankind's spiritual way from the patriarchs of spirituality — the Rishis of ancient India

— to the Christ. For the age of Gold on this spiritual way, that of ancient India, was followed by the spiritual age of Frankincense, that of ancient Iran, where the cosmic revelation of the Rishis became soul and an affair of the human heart; and the age of Frankincense, in its turn, was followed by the age of Myrrh — an age of mourning and penitence, of which ancient Egypt was the millennial-old torch. The ancient Egypt of which Hermes Trismegistus says in his treatise entitled "Asclepius":-

"Do you not know, Asclepius, that Egypt is an image of heaven or, to speak more exactly, in Egypt all the operations of the powers which rule and work in heaven have been transferred to earth below? Nay, it should rather be said that the whole Cosmos dwells in this our land as in its sanctuary.

And yet, since it is fitting that wise men should have knowledge of all events before they come to pass, you must not be left in ignorance of this: there will come a time when it will be seen that in vain have the Egyptians honored the deity with heartfelt piety and assiduous service; and all our holy worship will be found bootless and ineffectual. For the gods will return from earth to Heaven; Egypt will be forsaken, and the land which was once the home of religion will be left desolate, bereft of the presence of its deities. This land and region will be filled with foreigners... In that day will our most holy land, this land of shrines and temples, be filled with funerals and corpses...

O Egypt, Egypt, of thy religion nothing will remain but an empty tale, which thine own children in time to come will not believe; nothing will be left but graven words, and only the stones will tell of thy piety..." (Asclepius iii, 24b-25; trsl. W. Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, Oxford, 1924, pp. 341-343)

This is the voice of the embalmer, the sage of the wisdom of Myrrh, who is familiar with death, with the laws of death — the voice of the Jeremiah of Egypt. And here is the voice of frankincense — that of the sage of the wisdom of Frankincense — the voice of the psalmist of ancient Iran:

"We shall not, O Ahura Mazda! displease you and Asha (the Law) and Vahista Mananh (the Best Reason) who have been endeavoring in the gift of praises unto you....

When I first conceived of Thee, O Mazda, in my mind — says Zarathustra — I sincerely regarded Thee as the First Actor in the universe, as the Father of Reason (Good Mind), as the true Originator of the Right Law (Righteousness), as the Governor over the actions of mankind." (Gathas)

"We praise the intelligence of Ahura Mazda, in order to grasp the holy word.
We praise the wisdom of Ahura Mazda, in order to study the holy word.
We praise the tongue of Ahura Mazda, in order to speak forth the holy word.
We adore, every day and night, the mount Ushidarena, the Giver of Intelligence."
(Daily prayer)
(Gathas and Daily prayer in R.P. MASANI, "The Religion of the Good Life. Zoroastrianism", London, 1938, pp. 52, 139)

And, lastly, here is the voice of a sage of the Wisdom of Gold, preaching cosmic Humanism:

"The Purusha (Man) is this All,
that which was and that which shall be.
He is Lord of immortality,
which he grows beyond through (sacrificial) food...

One fourth of him is all beings,

The three (other) fourths of him is the Immortal in heaven.

Three fourths on high rose the Purusha,
One fourth of him arose again here (on the earth).
Thence in all directions he spread abroad,
as that which eats and that which eats not.

(Rigveda X,90,2-4, trsl. E.J. Thomas, "Vedic Hymns", London, 1923, pp.120-121)

Here is the golden key to material and spiritual Evolution, i.e. it is only the universal and transcendent human principle — the Adam Kadmon of the Cabbala, or the Purusha of the Vedas — who renders Evolution intelligible.

The spiral of Israel's three steps, each of fourteen generations, and of the three steps of spirituality — those of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh — in the general history of mankind, thus constituted the preparation for the coming of Christ. Aren't the three weeks of Advent an abridgement of this preparation through millennia — the fourth week being their summary: the work of John the Baptist?

Be that as it may, it is the law of the spiral which occupies us here. For it is the spiral which characterizes the action of the "agent of growth" which is the theme of the XVIIth Major Arcanum of Tarot — whose Card shows us the relationship that there is between the stellar-, female-, fluidic- and growth-principles. There are stars in the sky, there is a naked woman who is pouring water from two vases, and there are two shrubs which are growing. It is the water which makes it possible for the shrubs to grow in the sandy desert; it is the woman who is pouring water; it is the stars, lastly, from whence the luminosity emanates which is transformed into fluidity through the woman as intermediary. The latter therefore transforms Hope into the Continuity of Tradition and generations. It is thus that the shrubs are growing.

The context of the Card therefore represents a spiral which descends from the stars (first step) to the woman (second step), then to the water (third step), and ends with the shrubs (the result, the fourth step).

The Card answers the question: What does a tree need to live? Stars, a woman and water are needed — answers the Card.

Indeed, what is required for mankind's evolution to continue? Hope, Maternity and Heredity are required.

What is essential in order that spiritual truth is not forgotten, and that it lives? Hope, true Creativity and Tradition are the essential factors. The corroborating testimony of three ever-present witnesses — Spirit, Blood and Water — is necessary. True testimony through the Spirit, through Blood, and through Water will never fall into forgetfulness. One can kill spiritual truth, but it will resurrect.

Now, the unity of Hope, creativity and tradition is the "agent of growth". It is the concerted action of Spirit, Blood and Water. It is therefore indestructible; its action is irreversible; and its movement is irresistible.

And it is the agent of growth which is, in the last analysis, the subject of the Emerald Table of Hermes Trismegistus.

"And as all things were by mediation of the One, so all things arose from this one thing by a single act of adaption" — says the Emerald Table. Which amounts to saying: as the One is the creator of the essence of all things, thus there is a unique agent which adapts the existence of

all things to their essence — the principle of the adaptation of that which is born to its created prototype. This is the "agent of growth" or the principle of evolution. It is engendered by the spontaneous light of Hope (the Sun) reflected in the movement of the lower waters (the Moon), which produces the general impulse or "push" (the Wind), which bears primordial Hope towards its realization in the material domain (the Earth), which donates it with its constructive elements (i.e. nourishes or "nurses" it).

> "The father thereof is the sun, the mother the moon, the wind carried it in its womb; the earth is the nurse thereof"

— continues the Emerald Table. The spontaneous light from above, the light reflected below, the impulse or push of evolution which results, and which uses material elements for its realization — here is a complete analysis of the inner process of evolution and growth. It is a matter here of an agent which constantly adapts existence to essence — the "agent of growth" that the Emerald Table refers to with the term "Thelema"

> "It is the father of all works of wonder (Thelema) throughout the whole world; its power is perfect (complete) if it be cast on (transformed into) earth."

Now, the word "thelemos" (θέλημος) signifies in Greek, in poetic language, "voluntary, spontaneous", and the words "to thelema" (τὸ θέλημα) and "he thelesis" (ἡ θέλησις) signify in the language of the New Testament "desire" and "will". Therefore the author of the Emerald Table wants to explain the nature of the volitional and spontaneous impulse of the world in transformation and — as we say today — in evolution. He wants to reveal to us the origin and the constituent factors of the transforming agent of transformism, the active agent underlying evolution. This agent is described in the XVIth treatise of the "Corpus Hermeticum", "An epistle of Asclepius to King Ammon" as "the light which is shed downward, and illuminates all the sphere of water, earth, and air, he (the Sun) puts life into the things in this region of the Cosmos (including the earth), and stirs them up to birth, and by successive changes (metamorphoses) remakes the living creatures and transforms them [one into the other in the manner of a spiral (helikos tropon — ἕλικος τρόπον) — the changing of the one into the other operating a continual change from type to type (gene genon — γένη γενῶν) and from species to species (eide eidon — εἴδη εἰδῶν)]..." ("Asclepius to King Ammon", "Corpus Hermeticum" xvi, 8-9; trsl. W. Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, Oxford, 1924, pp. 267-269; the latter part of the translation, in brackets, is from the French translation of the "Corpus Hermeticum" by A. J. Festugière, vol. ii, Paris, 1945, p. 235)

Thus, this agent acts "in the manner of a spiral" between earth and heaven. For if one separates Thelema (the immanent desire in the depths of matter) from its material envelope, "it doth ascend from earth to heaven, and again it doth descend to earth, and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior" — in the manner of a spiral which ascends and descends.

You see, therefore, dear Unknown Friend, that transformism, the doctrine of evolution rediscovered by XIXth century science, was not only known as a fact in the Hermeticism of the Hellenistic epoch, but was also the subject of a profound philosophy which was occupied with the agent of transformism working "a continual change from type to type and from species to species" and transforming them "in the manner of a spiral".

Heliocentricity, also, was known in the Hermeticism of this epoch — at least thirteen or fourteen centuries before its rediscovery — as is evident from the above-cited Hermetic treatise:

> "...for he (the Sun) is stationed in the midst (of the Cosmos), and wears the Cosmos

as a wreath (crown) around him (μέσος γὰρ ἱδρύται στεφανηφορῶν τον κοσμον). And he lets the Cosmos go on its course, not leaving it far separated from himself; for like a skilled driver, he has made fast and bound to himself the chariot of the Cosmos, lest it should rush away in disorder." - ("Asclepius to King Ammon", "Corpus Hermeticum" xvi, 7; trsl. W. Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, Oxford, 1924, p. 267)

Could a more precise statement of the heliocentric solar system be given?

Now, the Hermeticists of antiquity knew the fact of evolution (transformism) and they sought the active agent of transformism, i.e. Thelema — this volitional and spontaneous impulse working in the very depths of matter. And the Emerald Table of Hermes Trismegistus is the legacy given by them for posterity: it contains a summary of what they had found. It is a testament of the ancient world to the modern world, through which a gift is made to the latter of what the former had achieved — or, at least, what they believed they had achieved.

"It will separate the element of earth from that of fire, the subtle from the gross, gently and with great sagacity. It doth ascend from earth to heaven; again it doth descend to earth, and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior. Thus thou wilt possess the glory of the brightness of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly far from thee.

This thing is the strongest of all powers, the force of all forces, for it overcometh every subtle thing and doth penetrate every solid substance.

Thus was the world created.

Hence there will be marvellous adaptations achieved, of which the manner is this.

For this reason I am called Hermes Trismegistus, because I hold three parts of the wisdom of the world.

That which I had to say about the operation of sol (the Sun) is (accomplished and) completed." (Tabula Smaragdina, 7-13; trsl. R. Steele and D. Singer, "Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine" xxi (1928), p. 42)

"Accomplished and completed" concludes this Testament of antiquity. Is it foolish pretension, naive arrogance, pious illusion or an establishment of fact? It is a matter of conscience and experience to be answered by each individually. Personally, I side with those who see here an establishment of fact — notably an establishment of fact concerning the "agent of growth", which is "the strongest of all powers, the force of all forces" moving every subtle thing and penetrating every solid substance.

The theme of the "agent of growth" has already been treated in these Letters, notably in the Letter on the IIIrd Arcanum and in that on the XIth Arcanum of the Tarot. We cannot avoid the law of the spiral, which rules not only the totality of the series of Major Arcana of the Tarot but also the endeavors and the progress in consciousness of he who meditates on them. We have had to return to this theme for a third time in the present Letter, which thus represents the "third step" of the spiral — to continue to infinity — concerning the theme of the agent of growth and of evolution.

The Emerald Table is a concise summary of what the ancient world had to say on the subject of "the agent of growth and evolution"; the Major Arcana of the Tarot are a summary, developed into a school or practical "system" of spiritual exercises, of what the medieval world had to say on the subject of this agent — as the fruit of its meditations on the Emerald Table and of its own efforts and spiritual experiences; in our time, therefore, it is a matter of the task of effecting the "third step" of the evolutionary spiral of the Hermetic Tradition — the third "renaissance" on the subject of the Emerald Table. Our time makes appeal to the collective endeavor of

Hermeticists of today to make a third summary, which will be for our time what the Tarot was for the Middle Ages and what the Emerald Table was for antiquity. Thus, just as the Emerald Table saved the essence of ancient wisdom, and just as the Tarot saved the essence of medieval wisdom, across the deluges which occurred in the time that separates us from them, may the essence of modern wisdom be saved in a spiritual "Noah's ark" from the deluge which is going to come, and may it thereby be transmitted to the future, just as the essence of ancient wisdom and that of medieval wisdom has been transmitted to us by means of the Emerald Table and the Major Arcana of the Tarot. The Tradition of Hermeticism blossomed in the past and must live in the future. This is why a new, modern summary is required, which will be as viable as the Emerald Table and as the Major Arcana of the Tarot.

This is the message of the Woman kneeling under the stars on the bank of a current which flows from the past into the future — a Woman who never ceases to pour Water from above into the flow of water below.

It is she who is the Mother of the Future, and this is why her message confronts us with Duty towards the Future — the Duty towards the Flow of uninterrupted Tradition. Let us therefore try to comply with this!

End of the XVIIth Letter.

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Meditations on the Tarot

Letters XVIII - XXII

A Journey into Christian Hermeticism

XVIIIth Meditation on the Major Arcanum of the Tarot — "La Lune" "The Moon"

God Forbade Lot and his family to look back: but Lot's wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. (Genesis xix, 26)

David's heart smote him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the Lord," I have sinned greatly in what I have done". (II Samuel xxiv)

Our intelligence, as it leaves the hands of Nature, has for its chief object the unorganized solid.

Of the discontinuous alone does the intellect form a clear idea. Of immobility alone does the intellect form a clear idea. The intellect lets what is new in each moment of history escape. It does not admit the unforeseeable. It rejects all creation.

The intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life.

But it is to the very inwardness of life that intuition leads us — by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely.

(Henri BERGSON, "Creative Evolution", trsl. A. Mitchell, London, 1964, pp. 162-164, 174, 186)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The prohibition to Lot and his family against looking back, David's sin in having numbered the people of Israel, and the characteristic traits of human intelligence (as opposed to intuition) formulated by Henri BERGSON have this in common that they relate to the problem of the inversion of the forward movement of life, i.e. they relate to the problem of retrograde movement. Now, it is the problem of retrograde movement, contrary to that of life, which is suggested spontaneously by the Card of the XVIIIth Major Arcanum of the Tarot — "The Moon". It is the antithesis of the XVIIth Arcanum "The Star". For if the latter evokes ideas, feelings and impulses of will relating to the evolution of life and consciousness, concerning their infinite development, the former evokes ideas, feelings and impulses of will relating to the inversion of the evolutionary movement of life and consciousness, i.e. to their envelopment, arrest of movement and retrograde movement. Instead of the current which flows and the verdant shrubs of the Card of the XVIIth Arcanum, we find the stagnant water of a swamp and two rigid stone towers in the Card of the XVIIIth Arcanum. Instead of the naked

Woman who makes the current (which continues in its flow) emanate from the two vases, we find an image of the most enveloped or shielded creature — the crayfish — at the bottom of the swampy basin, and two dogs (or a dog and a wolf) which are baying at the moon Above. Lastly, instead of the radiant constellation of eight stars, we find the darkness of a total eclipse of the Moon.

Through the totality of the context of its Card, the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot invites us to a spiritual exercise — to a meditation on that which arrests evolutionary movement and tends to give it a direction in an inverse sense. And just as the dominant and principal theme of the XVIIth Arcanum is the "agent of growth", so it is a matter in the XVIIIth Arcanum of the special agent of diminution — the principle of the eclipse. In the case of the XVIIIth Arcanum it is a matter neither of temptation from outside, which is the subject of the VIth Arcanum, nor of the Devil and demons — the intoxicating and enslaving forces — which constitute the subject of the XVth Arcanum, nor even of the presumptuous tendency to build "towers of Babel", which is the subject of the XVIth Arcanum, but rather of something which is there, which is given and imposed on every incarnated human soul by the very fact of being incarnated, i.e. which the Fate of being incarnated entails with necessity. The principle of the eclipse or the "agent of diminution" would be present and active in us even if the Devil and all demons resigned and even if all human beings learned the lesson of humility and abandoned the desire to build "towers of Babel".

The XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot is the Arcanum of the twofold current that Henri Bergson designates as "intelligence-matter" or "materialistic intellectuality", contrary to the twofold current "duration-spirit" or "intuition-conscience". For the current "intellectuality-materiality" that Bergson portrays like no other thinker is precisely this "agent of diminution" or "eclipse principle" that is suggested by the context of the Card of the XVIIIth Arcanum. Because the Moon is the principle of reflection: just as it reflects the light of the Sun, so does human intelligence reflect the creative light of Conscience — and the latter is eclipsed when "materialistic intellectuality" prevails. Just as man's will to master Nature sets "materialistic intellectuality" in motion and prescribes it the "rules of the game" for its work, so is the Moon of the XVIIIth Arcanum in eclipse, i.e. it is only fringed by rays of reflected sunlight, whilst the surface of the Moon itself reflects only the image of a human face in profile. Further, just as the crayfish moves backwards in swimming, so does human intelligence move backwards, i.e. in the direction "effect-cause", when it is engaged in the act of knowledge that is proper to it. The other details of this Card — the colored drops which are falling upwards, the two towers, the two dogs which are baying, the stagnant water of the swamp — only make more specific, as we shall see through the following meditation on the central theme of this Arcanum, further aspects of the current "intellectuality-materiality" that is contrary to the current of creative evolution or "duration-spirit".

The "Sun", "Moon" and "Stars" are — according to Genesis — lights "in the Firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth", whose creation constituted the fourth day of the creation of the world.

Now, human consciousness is the field where three kinds of light are manifest: creative light, reflected light and revealed light. The first participates in the work of the creation of the world such as it has continued since the "sixth day" of creation, which we now call "creative evolution"; the second illumines the dark field of action of the human will, which we now call "matter"; the last orientates us towards transcendent values and truths which constitute,

as it were, the supreme court of appeal, the ultimate criterion, of all that is of worth and of all that is true in space and time. It is thanks to these three types of light that man is at one and the same time a creator participating in creative evolution, a master of matter — author of the work of civilization — and that he is a kneeling worshipper of God, capable of orientating his will towards the divine will. Creative consciousness, reflecting intelligence, and revelation from above are the three lights of the human microcosm — its "Sun", "Moon" and "Stars".

The three Major Arcana of the Tarot — "The Star", "The Moon" and "The Sun" are those of light revealed from above, reflecting intelligence and creative consciousness. We were occupied with the stellar Arcanum in the last Letter. In the following Letter we shall be occupied with the solar Arcanum. In this Letter, it is a matter of the lunar Arcanum, i.e. the Arcanum of the inseparable couple of the Earth and its satellite — the Moon — or, for the microcosm, materiality and intelligence. It should be formally pointed out that the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot reveals the relationship between the Moon and the Earth; it deals with the couple Moon-Earth as such — just as, for example, Henri Bergson deals with the couple "intelligence-matter" as such. For materiality (i.e. the material and mechanical aspect of the world) is to intelligence (i.e. to the faculty of consciousness which proceeds from effects to causes by induction and deduction) as the Earth is to the Moon; intelligence is attuned to matter, and the latter is attuned to intelligence by lending itself easily to analysis and synthesis. Matter thus adapts itself to intelligence, and the latter "is characterized by the unlimited power of decomposing according to any law and of recomposing into any system" (Henri BERGSON, "Creative Evolution", trsl. A. Mitchell, London, 1964, p.165). They constitute an inseparable couple. Imagine what the state of intelligence would be if it were deprived of the environment of the material world, where there is the "unlimited power of decomposing according to any law and of recomposing into any system". Not only would it be incapable of separating out particular things from their enduring totality and grouping them into categories and classes, but also it would be powerless to manufacture the implements and machines which it makes use of to supplement the organs of action and perception with which Nature has endowed the human being.

The divisibility and malleability of inorganic matter (or matter rendered inorganic) are as indispensable to intelligence as water is to a fish which swims, or as the air is to a bird which flies. They constitute its vital element.

> "The essential function of our intellect, as the evolution of life has fashioned it, is to be a light for our conduct, to make ready for our action on things, to foresee, for a given situation, the events, favorable or unfavorable, which may follow thereupon. Intellect therefore instinctively selects in a given situation whatever is like something already known; it seeks this out, in order that it may apply its principle that "like produces like". In just this does the prevision of the future by common sense consist. Science carries this faculty to the highest possible degree of exactitude and precision, but does not alter its essential character. Like ordinary knowledge, in dealing with things science is concerned only with the aspect of repetition. Though the whole be original, science will always manage to analyze it into elements or aspects which are approximately a reproduction of the past. Science can work only on what is supposed to repeat itself... Anything that is

irreducible and irreversible in the successive moments of history eludes science." (Henri Bergson, "Creative Evolution"; trsl. A. Mitchell, London, 1964, p.31)

At the same time there is reason to point out that the aspect of the repetition of things that intelligence seeks in the first place corresponds to the almost innate inclination of intelligence to reduce movement to immobility and to transform time into space. "Repetition" is only the immobile element in movement and the spatial element in time. When, for example, we speak of the yearly cycle of seasons, we turn the movement of time into space; we replace movement by the representation of a circle in space. And this circle signifies the stable repetition of the course of the seasons: springtime - summer - autumn - winter - springtime etc.

No one has stated this postulate of intelligence — i.e. repetition, and the consequent transformation of time into space — with more force than Solomon, who says in Ecclesiastes:-

"What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said: See, this is new? It has been already in the ages before us. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to happen among those who come after." (Ecclesiastes i, 9-11)

Clearly, it is a matter here of a postulate — a dogma of faith for intelligence — because the statement by SOLOMON surpasses the limits of experience by affirming that something which arises as new in the field of immediate experience must be the repetition of something old, fallen into forgetfulness, and that it is only ignorance due to the forgetfulness of the past which makes it appear as new, and that it will be just the same in the future, i.e. everything that will be judged as new will be thanks only to forgetfulness of what happens in the present. Time creates nothing; it only combines and recombines that which is given for ever in space. Time is like the wind, and space is like the sea; the wind produces waves in infinite repetition on the surface of the sea, but the sea remains the same; it does not change at all. Therefore there is nothing — and there cannot be anything — new under the sun.

This is the postulate of intelligence, advanced some three thousand years ago, which is still accepted and which underlies the way intelligence works.

And here is its antithesis, formulated by BERGSON:

"The universe endures. The more we study the nature of time, the more we shall comprehend that duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new." (Henri Bergson, "Creative Evolution"; trsl. A. Mitchell, London, 1964, p.11)

We shall return later to the Bergsonian — and Hermetic — antithesis, when the necessity for it will be blindingly apparent as the natural reply to this postulate of intelligence, and when it will present itself to the mind as, so to say, the "complementary color" to the Arcanum "The Moon", which Arcanum "The Moon", in so far as it is a spiritual exercise, has no other aim than to evoke the conscious desire to go further than intelligence, and to decide to make a leap in order to leave its sphere.

But let us return to the pair "intelligence-matter" or "intellectuality - materiality".

The intellect aims first of all at constructing.

"This fabrication is exercised exclusively on inert matter, in this sense, that even if it makes use of organized material, it treats it as inert, without troubling about the

> life which animated it. And of inert matter itself, fabrication deals only with the solid; the rest escapes by its very fluidity. If therefore, the tendency of the intellect is to fabricate, we may expect to find that whatever is fluid in the real will escape it in part, and whatever is life in the living will escape it altogether. Our intelligence, as it leaves the hands of Nature, has for its chief object the unorganized solid." (Henri Bergson, "Creative Evolution"; trsl. A. Mitchell, London, 1964, pp. 161-162)

Thus the axiom of intelligence that the whole is greater than the part is valid wholly and without reserve when it is a matter of a solid body or a liquid measure (i.e. when fluid is rendered similar to a solid body). Half a stone is evidently smaller than the whole stone, and half a glass of water indicates less water than a whole glass. But this axiom is not valid unreservedly when it is a matter of the functions of a living organism. You can certainly have a leg cut off, which is many times larger than the heart of the human body, without death ensuing, but you cannot do without the heart, without dying. The function of the heart is more essential to the life of the whole human organism than the leg, although the heart is very much smaller than the leg. Thus, with respect to a living organism, the axiom in question has to be modified — in the sense that, from the point of view of functioning, the functioning parts and the functioning whole can be equal. Therefore, so far as the functioning of a living organism is concerned, one could bowl over the bourgeois logician with the formula: the whole can be equal to the part.

The same axiom, applied to the moral domain, should undergo still further an active modification. In the domain of pure values the axiom in question changes its form and becomes transformed into its contrary. Indeed, Caiaphas' argument in favor of a decision against Jesus, advanced to the assembly of the Sanhedrin, "that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish" (John xi, 50), is evidently simply an appeal to the logical axiom that the whole (the nation) is greater (is of higher value) than the part (a single man). But the whole Jewish nation had no other reason for existence than part of it — the Messiah! Still more: Is the Word — "through which all things were made and outside of which nothing has come into existence", and which became flesh — a part or is it the whole of the Jewish nation, mankind, lastly, the whole world?

Or again take the parable of the lost sheep, where the Master says:-

> "If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray." (Matthew xviii, 12-13)

Is the axiom that the whole is greater than the part still valid in the domain of moral values?

Or again, take the parables concerning the treasure hidden in a field, the pearl of great price, and the lesson of the poor widow's two copper coins: Is it not evident from them that for the world of values the axiom in question should be the part can be greater than the whole?

These conclusions at which one arrives when one applies logic to the organic and moral spheres are shocking for intelligence, whose rules of logic are in accordance with inorganic solidity.

David's great sin — in ordering that the people of Israel be numbered (cf. II Samuel xxiv) — consisted in the application of the method proper to human intelligence of reducing the living and moral to inorganic solidity, i.e. men to things: the living and moral (the community of Israel) to number. In giving the order to count the people of Israel, David committed the sin, in the

spiritual domain, of having reduced living and feeling human beings to dead and inanimate things, i.e. to corpses. Thus he sinned against the commandment: Thou shalt not kill.

And it was not only during the darkest time of the year — when the nights are at their longest — but it was also under the sign of virgin intelligence eclipsed by human terrestrial intelligence that the nativity of Jesus CHRIST took place. For it took place at the time of an enrolment of the whole world: "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled ... when Quirinius was governor of Syria" (Luke ii, 1,2). It was a time when the sin of David was repeated, but on the scale of the Roman Empire — over "all the world". Then, Caesar Augustus decreed that all living and feeling human beings, including the incarnated Word, be treated as inanimate things. It was winter time as far as the Sun is concerned, and the time of an eclipse of the Moon...

Our intelligence is therefore only at ease, it is only entirely at home, when it is at work on raw matter, and in particular on solid objects:- "What is the most general property of the material world? It is extended: it presents to us objects external to other objects, and, in these objects, parts external to parts. No doubt, it is useful to us, in view of our ulterior manipulation, to regard each object as divisible into parts arbitrarily cut up, each part being again divisible as we like, and so on ad infinitum... To this possibility of decomposing matter as much as we please, and in any way we please, we allude when we speak of the continuity of material extension; but this continuity, as we see it, is nothing else but our ability, an ability that matter allows us to choose the mode of discontinuity we shall find in it. It is always, in fact, the mode of discontinuity once chosen that appears to us as the actually real one and that which fixes our attention, just because it rules our action. Thus discontinuity is thought for itself, it is thinkable in itself; we form an idea of it by a positive act of mind; while the intellectual representation of continuity is negative, being, at bottom, only the refusal of our mind, before any actually given system of decomposition, to regard it as the only possible one. Of the discontinuous alone does the intellect form a clear idea." (Henri BERGSON, "Creative Evolution"; trsl. A. Mitchell, London, 1964, pp. 162-163)

For this reason not only science decomposes, e.g. objects into chemical substances, the latter into molecules, molecules into atoms, and atoms into electrons, but also occult science (which would like to equal official science) decomposes. For example, the human being is decomposed into three principles — spirit, soul and body — when it is a matter of the place that man occupies between God and Nature; or into four principles — physical body, vital body, astral body, and ego (self) — when it is a matter of the practical task of mastership by the operant of his instruments, as is the case in Raja-Yoga; or even into seven principles — physical body, etheric body, astral body, lower self, reason, intuition, and higher Self — when it is a matter of the evolution of the human being in time; or lastly into nine principles — three corporeal principles, three soul principles, and three spiritual principles — when it is a matter of the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm, with its nine spiritual hierarchies, which reflect, in their turn, the divine Holy Trinity. If we add here also that Christian theology divides man into only two principles — body and soul — that the Vedanta and the Cabbala divide him into five principles — for the Cabbala these are b a s a r, n e p h e s h, n e s h a m a h, h a y a h, and y e h i d a h — that Cabbalists also divide man into ten principles, according to the ten Sephiroth, and that certain astrologers divide him into twelve principles, according to the twelve signs of the zodiac, it becomes evident that man easily allows himself diverse modes of decomposition, according to the aims of

the intelligence which applies them. But he admits of this operation only in so far as he is given over to the manipulations of intelligence which treat him in the way proper to it, i.e. which decompose him according to a system corresponding in the best possible way to the ends that the will is aiming at. Because intelligence — even when it is engaged in occult science — clearly represents to itself only the discontinuous.

For this reason intelligence represents motion to itself as if it were discontinuous. It reconstructs motion by means of a motionless series that it places side by side, i.e. it makes the motion stop a desired number of times, obtaining in this way a cinematographic film, that it then makes roll: "Suffice it now to say that to the stable and immobile our intellect is attached by virtue of its natural disposition. Of immobility alone does the intellect form a clear idea." (Henri Bergson, "Creative Evolution"; trsl. A. Mitchell, London, 1964, p.164)

The Greek philosopher Zeno of ELEA, who lived twenty-four centuries before cinematography, author of the celebrated arguments concerning the "flying arrow" and "Achilles and the tortoise", even denied the reality of motion for the reason that intelligence can represent only a succession of static positions in movement. Just as SOLOMON proclaimed, three thousand years ago, the postulate of intelligence "that there is nothing new under the sun", so did ZENO proclaim, twenty-four centuries ago, the other postulate of intelligence "that there is no continuous movement, there are only successive points of rest".

Intelligence is attached above all to positions of movement and not to the progress through which it passes from one position to another — progress which is movement itself.

"From mobility itself our intellect turns aside, because it has nothing to gain in dealing with it. If the intellect were meant for pure theorizing, it would take its place within movement, for movement is reality itself, and immobility is always only apparent or relative. But the intellect is meant for something altogether different. Unless it does violence to itself, it takes the opposite course; it always starts from immobility, as if this were the ultimate reality..."
(Henri Bergson, "Creative Evolution"; trsl. A. Mitchell, London, 1964, p.163)

Intelligence concentrates only on the harvest, i.e. on the product, and not on the production — which is, for it, only the means, a series of steps, for arriving at the product. It is always the result to which it aspires. It is always the autumn of things and events which it has in view. It is orientated towards facts — accomplished things — and not towards the process of creation, or that of becoming. The springtime and the summer of things and events either escape it or are taken into account only under the aspect of autumn — as its stages of preparation. Germination and growth are then considered only in relation to the harvest. Mobility coming into being — this is germination and growth; whilst the harvest is "become" — it is the product.

Quite other than the principle underlying intelligence — the principle of autumn — is that underlying the intuition of faith:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and nothing that was made was made without him. In him was l i f e, and the l i f e was the l i g h t of men"
- says the Gospel according to John in advancing the principle of the intuition of faith, the principle of springtime. It is the beginning, the springtime of things of the world, to which the Gospel of St. John aspires, and it is the creative Word — the mobility itself at the heart of

life and underlying the light of consciousness — that it advances as the point of departure for all that follows. The Gospel of St. John invites us from the outset to an unparalleled act of violence to our intelligence — in transposing from autumn, where it is at home, to full springtime; from the harvest to the sowing; from things made to the creative Word; from vivified things to Life itself; from illumined things to Light itself.

We shall occupy ourselves in more detail with creative intuition — or the mystery of faith — in the Letter on the XIXth Arcanum of the Tarot — the Sun —, which is the Arcanum of Springtime. Here it is a matter simply of portraying more clearly the lunar and autumnal principle of intelligence by means of contrasting the principle of creative intuition — such as it is stated in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John — with the principle of intelligence, which is the theme of the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot.

Now, the Gospel of St. John appeals to the human soul to transpose its intelligence from autumn into full springtime — to rejuvenate it by placing it in the domain of creativity instead of that of the created, i.e. to accomplish a "conjunction" of the Sun and Moon, expressing it in astrological terms. This means to say that, if the postulate of intelligence is "that there is nothing new under the sun", it is invited to adapt itself to the pure and simple creativity expressed in the formula "In the beginning was the Word"; that if intelligence represents clearly to itself only immobility, it is bidden to plunge itself into the act of pure creation of the Word; that if intelligence represents clearly to itself only discontinuity, it finds itself confronted with the Word, in which is the Life which is the Light of Men; that if intelligence has for its principal object inorganic solidity, it now has the task of understanding both the whole world as the organizatory act of the Word and Jesus Christ as the cosmic Word made flesh; that if, lastly, intelligence is characterized by a natural incomprehension of life, it has now to understand the Word at the heart of Life, and the Life underlying the Light of consciousness. And all this it will do not in order to understand — i.e. in order to reap that which is — but rather in order to effect an act of becoming, in order to accomplish the birth of the new, i.e. of that which is not. Because "to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God,

> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"
> (John i, 12-13)

Here is the difference between the nature of intelligence and that of intuition of faith, between the principle of autumn and that of spring. The former is understanding of that which is; the latter is participation in the becoming of that which is to be. When Abraham left U R and went to a strange country by way of the desert in order to give birth to a people of the future — some centuries after him — he acted as a man of the springtime, or a man of faith. When Solomon, in the treatise known under the title "Ecclesiastes", summarized all that he had learned during his life through experience and reflection, he acted as a man of autumn, a man of intelligence. Abraham was a sower; Solomon was a reaper.

In so far as Hermeticism is concerned, it has a history of continuous and sustained effort aimed at an alliance of intelligence and the intuition of faith — the alchemical marriage of the Moon and the Sun. Is this marriage possible? St. THOMAS Aquinas, Henri BERGSON and Pierre Teilhard de CHARDIN, amongst others, say yes — each in his own way. I have chosen these three names because they represent Theology, Philosophy and Science. No doubt it is encouraging that these eminent representatives of Religion, Philosophy and Science lend their assistance to our task, but if this were not so would we be able to aspire to anything else? Would we be able to

abandon the millennial-old work and effort aimed at alliance — at the marriage and union of intelligence and faith? No. Because whether we like it or not, we are engaged on this way for ever — even if it were a matter only of a mirage.

I say — even if it were a matter only of a mirage, because this alliance, this marriage, this union, has inspired and inspires a continuous and sustained effort through the millennia, but this effort has never — as far as I know — been crowned with complete success. Intelligence and the intuition of faith sometimes approach quite near; they sometimes collaborate as allies; they sometimes complement one another in a way to give rise to the highest hope; but their true fusion, their complete and lasting alchemical marriage, is still not achieved. In the minds and hearts of certain workers at this great work, intelligence and the intuition of faith already act as an engaged couple, but not yet as a married couple. There has as yet been no complete success in obtaining the alloy of these two metals. It is always either silvered gold or gilded silver.

With THOMAS Aquinas, for example, it is silvered gold; with most occultist-authors it is gilded silver. Origen, Dionysius the Areopagite, Jacob Boehme, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, Vladimir Soloviev and Nicolas Berdyaev, for example, show in their works a progress which is very advanced in substantially bringing together intelligence and the intuition of faith. The same could be said for Henri Bergson and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

Here is the endeavor that Henri Bergson proposes to us in the direction of a fusion of intelligence and intuition:-

> After having ascertained that "the intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life", Bergson illumines the nature of instinct. He says:- "Instinct, on the contrary, is molded on the very form of life. While intelligence treats everything mechanically, instinct proceeds, so to speak, organically. If the consciousness that slumbers in it should awake, if it were wound up into knowledge instead of being wound off into action, if we could ask and it could reply, it could give to us the most intimate secrets of life." (trsl., p.174) ....
>
> "Instinct and intelligence are two divergent developments of one and the same principle, which in the one case remains within itself, in the other steps out of itself and becomes absorbed in the utilization of inert matter". (trsl., p.177)
>
> "A very significant fact is the swing to-and-fro of scientific theories of instinct, from regarding it as intelligent to regarding it as simply intelligible, or, shall I say, between likening it to an intelligence "lapsed" and reducing it to a pure mechanism. Each of these systems of explanation triumphs in its criticism of the other, the first when it shows us that instinct cannot be a mere reflex, the other when it declares that instinct is something different from intelligence, even fallen into unconsciousness... The concrete explanation, no longer scientific, but metaphysical (or Hermetic, we would add — author's note), must be sought along quite another path, not in the direction of intelligence, but in that of "sympathy". Instinct is sympathy. If this sympathy could extend its object and also reflect upon itself, it would give us the key to vital operations — just as intelligence, developed and disciplined, guides us into matter. For — we cannot too often repeat it — intelligence and instinct are turned in opposite directions: the former towards inert matter, the latter towards life. Intelligence, by means of science, which is its work, will deliver up to us more and more completely the secret of physical operations; of life it brings us, and moreover only claims to bring us, a translation in terms

of inertia. It goes all round life, taking from outside the greatest possible number of views of it, drawing it into itself instead of entering into it. But it is to the very inwardness of life that intuition leads us — by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely." (Henri Bergson, "Creative Evolution"; trsl. A. Mitchell, London, 1964, pp. 174, 177, 185-186)

Here, therefore, is the practical task of the endeavor. It envisages rendering the instincts disinterested, i.e. the true aim of all asceticism, or that part of the way towards mystical union that tradition calls "via purgativa" — the way of purification of the spiritual disciple — or also "purgatory" (purgatorium), when it is a matter of the way of human destiny; then it envisages instinct becoming conscious of itself, i.e. what tradition calls "via illuminativa" — the way of illumination of the spiritual disciple — or also "Heaven" (Coelum), when it is a matter of the way of human destiny; and then, lastly, it envisages instinct becoming capable of reflecting upon its object and of expanding indefinitely whilst being completely united to it through sympathy, i.e. what tradition calls "via unitiva" — the way of union. The fruits of the way of union are the gnosis (where "instinct is capable of reflecting upon its object") and the mysticism of contemplation (where "instinct is capable of expanding indefinitely") — or also the "visio beatifica" (beatific vision) which human souls enjoy in Heaven after purgatory and after their celestial school in which they learn not to be dazzled by the divine Light, but rather to see through it, when it is a matter of the way of human destiny.

Such is the task. But what is the endeavor? How is it to be realized?

It consists of the enterprise of the "going out" of intelligence from its milieu. Here is what Bergson has to say on this:

"In vain, we shall be told, you claim to go beyond intelligence: how can you do that except by intelligence? All that is clear in your consciousness is intelligence. You are inside your own thought; you cannot get out of it. Say, if you like, that the intellect is capable of progress, that it will see more and more clearly into a greater and greater number of things; but do not speak of engendering it, for it is with your intellect itself that you would have to do the work.

The objection presents itself naturally to the mind. But the same reasoning would prove also the impossibility of acquiring any new habit. It is of the essence of reasoning to shut us up in the circle of the given. But action breaks the circle. If we had never seen a man swim, we might say that swimming is an impossible thing, inasmuch as, to learn to swim, we must begin by holding ourselves up in the water and, consequently, already know how to swim. Reasoning, in fact, always nails us down to the solid ground. But if, quite simply, I throw myself into the water without fear, I may keep myself up well enough at first by merely struggling, and gradually adapt myself to the new environment: I shall thus have learnt to swim. So, in theory, there is a kind of absurdity in trying to know otherwise than by intelligence; but if the risk be frankly accepted, action will perhaps cut the knot that reasoning has tied and will not unloose. Besides, the risk will appear to grow less, the more our point of view is adopted. We have shown that intellect has detached itself from a vastly wider reality but that there has never been a clean cut between the two; all around conceptual thought there remains an indistinct fringe which recalls its origin. And further we compared the intellect to a solid nucleus formed by means of condensation. This nucleus does not differ radically from the fluid surrounding it. It can only be reabsorbed in it because it is made of the same

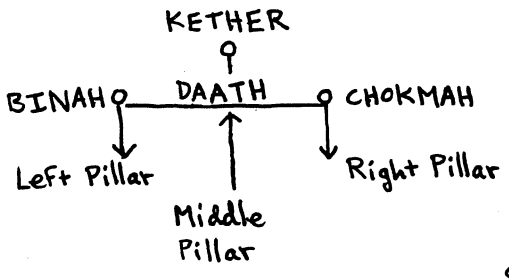
substance. He who throws himself into the water, having known only resistance of the solid earth, will immediately be drowned if he does not struggle against the fluidity of the new environment: he must perforce still cling to that solidity, so to speak, which even water presents. Only on this condition can he get used to fluid's fluidity. So of our thought, when it has decided to make the leap.

But leap it must, that is, leave its own environment. Reason, reasoning on its powers, will never succeed in extending them, though the extension would not appear at all unreasonable once it were accomplished. Thousands and thousands of variations on the theme of walking will never yield a rule for swimming: come, enter the water, and when you know how to swim, you will understand how the mechanism of swimming is connected with that of walking. Swimming is an extension of walking, but walking would never have pushed you on to swimming. So you may speculate as intelligently as you will on the mechanism of intelligence; you will never, by this method, succeed in going beyond it. You may get something more complex, but not something higher nor even something different. You must take things by storm: you must thrust intelligence outside itself by an act of will."

(Henri Bergson, "Creative Evolution"; trsl. A. Mitchell, London, 1964, pp. 202-204)

This is the essence of "Bergsonian yoga", i.e. the practical method of making intelligence unite itself with instinct or the principle of sympathy, so that the latter can extend its subject matter and reflect upon itself — or, in other words, so as to develop intuition.

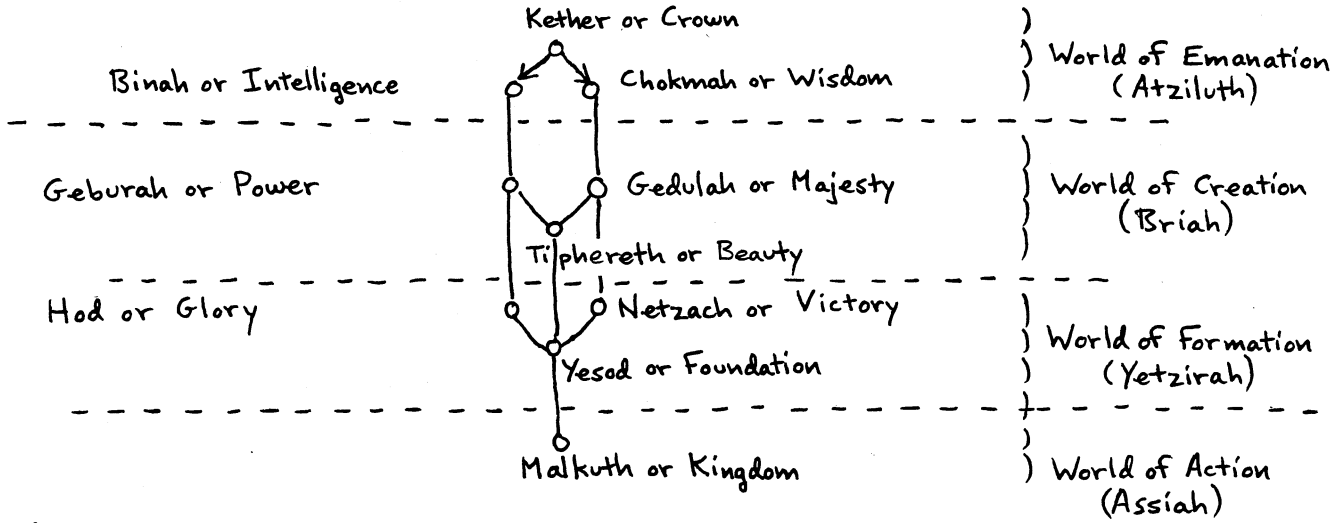
Now, the endeavor that Bergson has in mind is what the Cabbala calls K A W W A N A (כַּוָּנָה), and the result of this endeavor — that Bergson calls "intuition" — is called in the Cabbala D A A T H (דַּעַת). KAWWANA is profound meditation, i.e. the endeavor of intelligence which aims at plunging into the depths of darkness surrounding it. K A W W A N A differs essentially from Cartesian meditation, where it is a matter notably of the concentration of the clarity of intelligence itself within itself, and also from Kantian meditation, where intelligence strives to rise above itself by making itself the object of observation, analysis and criticism. Profound meditation or KAWWANA is neither only concentration of the light of intelligence with a view to an intensification of its clarity, nor is it only the endeavor of intelligence to arrive at knowledge of itself. Profound meditation is the endeavor of intelligence to probe the dark depths which surround it and to which it finds access by means of sympathy, instead of through the exercise of its own logical, analytical and critical faculties. Speaking in terms of the Cabbala, it is therefore a matter of the marriage of the principle of intelligence — the Sephirah BINAH (בִּינָה) — and the principle of wisdom — the Sephirah CHOKMAH (חָכְמָה) — in the "middle pillar" of the Sephiroth Tree



D A A T H is therefore the state of consciousness where intelligence and wisdom — acquired and acquirable knowledge, on the one hand, and latent and actualizable knowledge, on the other hand — become one. It is the same state of consciousness that the Church calls "intellect illumined by grace" (intellectus gratia illuminatus) — Grace being the principle actualizing within us latent knowledge of the "image and likeness of God", and intellect being the Bergsonian intelligence which unites with and

understands things that it would never have understood from within itself. It is therefore "illumined".

With respect to the Sephiroth Tree of the Cabbala, it must be pointed out that DAATH is nowhere to be found as a Sephirah or as a constituent element of the system (or "Tree") of Sephiroth. Whereas there are <u>four</u> Sephiroth to be found on the middle pillar — namely KETHER (כֶּתֶר) or the Crown, TIPHERETH (תִּפְאֶרֶת) or Beauty, YESOD (יְסוֹד) or the Foundation, and MALKUTH (מַלְכוּת) or the Kingdom — Daath is something to be <u>created</u>, to be added to the Sephiroth Tree. This means to say that a synthesis of the pillar of Wisdom — containing the Sephiroth GEDULAH (גְּדוּלָה) or Majesty, and NETZACH (נֶצַח) or Victory — and the pillar of Intelligence — containing the Sephiroth GEBURAH (גְּבוּרָה) or Power, and HOD (הוֹד) or Glory — is foreseen in the Sephiroth Tree only for the world of creation (olam ha-briah) and the world of formation (olam ha-yetzirah), whilst in the world of Emanation (olam ha-atziluth) the synthesis constitutes the <u>point of departure</u> of the emanation, creation and formation of the world; and the world of action (olam ha-assiah) is itself the synthesis of the two columns.



As is evident from this scheme of the Sephiroth Tree, there is a synthesis of the principles of Wisdom and Intelligence <u>preceding</u> the division of these two principles, which takes place in the Sephirah Kether. There is also a synthesis which takes place in the world of action (Malkuth); otherwise it is effected in artistic creativity (Tiphereth-Beauty), or in love between the sexes (Yesod), but it is not foreseen here for the <u>act of knowledge</u>, i.e. for the domain of gnosis.

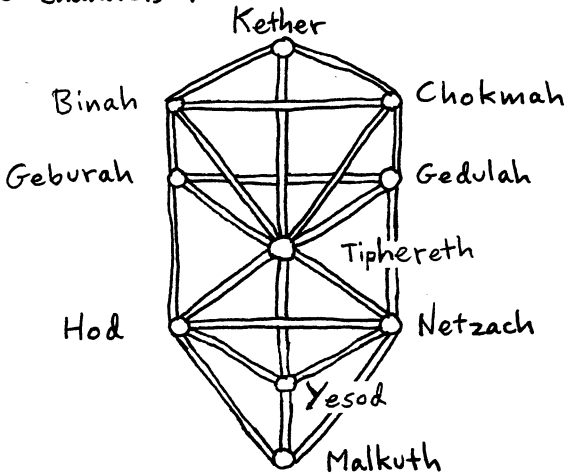
Now, it is precisely the act of knowledge which is in question in the case of D A A T H, which is the aim of the spiritual school of the Cabbala — just as it is that of Hermeticism in general; it is nothing other than the task of the realization of intuition, by uniting disinterested instinct and disinterested intelligence, as advanced by Henri Bergson. Cabbalists and Hermeticists (including Henri Bergson) therefore pursue the same aim, i.e. the union of intelligence and wisdom (or spontaneous knowledge) <u>other</u> than their union in artistic or aesthetic creativity and in love between the sexes. They have it in mind to achieve a <u>third</u> type of union of intelligence and wisdom: the "gnostic" union or D A A T H or intuition.

We have spoken above of this millennial-old task of Hermeticism — this work and effort continued from century to century aiming at a complete fusion or "marriage" of the principles

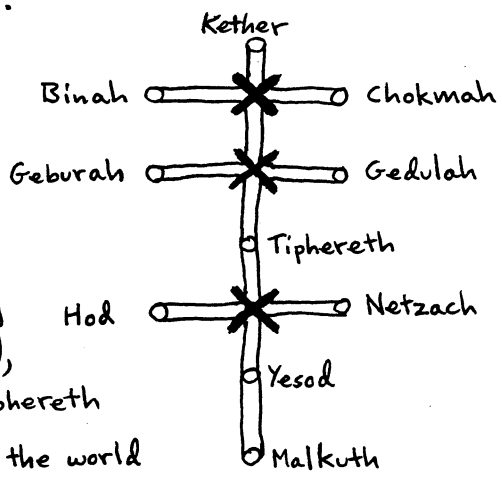
of the intelligence and wisdom, i.e. of the power of knowledge acquired by logical discourse and the spontaneous knowledge of revelation. We have also pointed to some concrete facts — names of such personalities — which are of a nature to inspire in us the hope that this work will one day be realized. Nevertheless, it is not yet so, because it is a matter of the realization of the third Great Arcanum of the Hermetic tradition.

The Hermetic tradition teaches the existence of three "Great Arcana", the third of which is that of D A A T H or the marriage of intelligence and wisdom. Here is how the "Great Arcana" are placed in the oral tradition of Hermeticism, making use of the Sephiroth Tree.

The Sephiroth Tree, as is well known, consists not only of the Sephiroth located in the four "worlds" (of Emanation, Creation, Formation and Action), but also of lines of communication between the Sephiroth, the "channels":



There are therefore 22 "channels" joining the ten Sephiroth in the Sephiroth Tree. Beyond the ten Sephiroth themselves, special significance is attached to the three "crossing-points" on the middle pillar of horizontal channels with vertical channels:



These three crossing-points, each marked in the scheme by a St. Andrew's cross, indicate the "metaphysical or psychological points", where the three tasks — named "Great Arcana" — are to be realized. The first Great-Arcanum — called the "Great Magical Arcanum" — is situated at the crossing-point of the horizontal channel joining the Sephiroth Netzach (Victory) and Hod (Glory), and the vertical channel joining the Sephiroth Tiphereth (Beauty) and Yesod (Foundation). It belongs to the world of Formation.

The second Great Arcanum — that of moral geniality — is situated at the crossing-point of the horizontal channel joining the Sephiroth Gedulah (Majesty) and Geburah (Power), and the vertical channel joining Kether (Crown) and Tiphereth (Beauty). It belongs to the world of creation.

The third Great Arcanum — that of geniality in the domain of knowledge, the gnostic Arcanum — is situated at the crossing-point of the horizontal channel joining the Sephiroth Chokmah (Wisdom) and Binah (Intelligence), and the vertical channel joining Kether (Crown)

and Tiphereth (Beauty).

It is the state of consciousness that the Cabbalists call D A A T H, that the Hindu yogis call "Samadhi", and that we call here — with Henri Bergson — "intuition". It belongs essentially to the world of Emanation, i.e. the sphere of divine respiration, the sphere of the Holy Spirit.

The Great Magical Arcanum is therefore the center of the cross formed by the current "Beauty-Love" and the current "Inspired Elevation - Certainty of Knowledge". It is a matter, therefore, of the task of realizing the marriage of the creative fire of imagination with the limpid clarity of the waters of thought in the current which goes out from Beauty and ends in Love.

The Great Arcanum of the moral life is the center of the cross formed by the binary Magnanimity - Justice in the current divine Radiation - Beauty. It is a matter of the realization of the marriage of the charity which pardons all and everything with the judgement of strict justice in the current which emanates from divine essence and arrives at the realization of beauty.

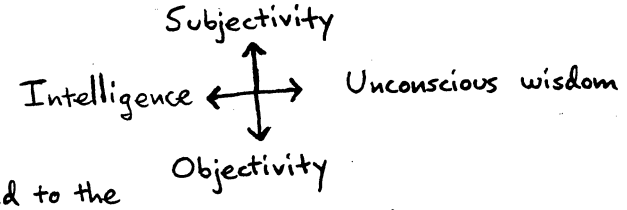
The Great Arcanum of knowledge is the center of the cross formed by the binary Wisdom - Intelligence in the current divine Radiation - Beauty. It is a matter of the realization of the marriage of revelation from above with argumentative intelligence based on experience.

The three Great Arcana of the Tradition are therefore three crosses formed by the vertical middle pillar and three horizontal channels on the Sephiroth Tree. This is why the triple cross ‡ is the traditional symbol of complete initiation, and this is also why the title "Trismegistus" ("Thrice-Greatest") is attributed to the founder of Hermeticism, the author of the Emerald Table.

Much has been written on the gnostic, moral and magical Great Arcana, and no doubt still more will be written in the future — their themes beings central and inexhaustible at one and the same time. Here it is a matter simply of considering the Great Arcanum of the marriage of intelligence and wisdom in the context of the two other Great Arcana of the Tradition. For the three Great Arcana are, truth to tell, only three aspects on three planes of one single Great Arcanum of the marriage of opposites in the head, in the heart and in the will. In other words, it is a matter of three aspects of the sole Great Arcanum of the Cross, since it is always the cross which realizes the marriage of opposites — including that of the formal knowledge of intelligence and the material knowledge due to revelation from above. The intuition of which Henri Bergson speaks is the fruit of the gradual transmutation of intelligence which has put its light at the disposal of the whispering — from black depths — of instinct-wisdom. It is the vow of obedience made by intelligence to the element which transcends it, which works its gradual transformation of the organ of formal knowledge (i.e. of the knowledge of the relationships of things and beings) into an organ of material knowledge (i.e. of the knowledge of things and beings as such). And it is the vow of poverty made by intelligence to the element which transcends it which renders it capable of perceiving this element and of receiving its intimate teaching, with regard to which it would be deaf and blind if it were not emptied of its own richness, i.e. if it did not know how to reduce itself to silence in order to listen. And it is, lastly, the vow of chastity, made by intelligence to

the element which transcends it, which transforms it gradually from an entity greedy for quantity of knowledge into an entity which seeks only the profound and essential, i.e. quality.

The gnostic aspect of the Great Arcanum of the "conjunctio oppositorum" ("conjunction of opposites"), of the marriage of opposites, is thus the transmutation of intelligence which is occupied with the "how" of things into an intuitive organ which is occupied with the "what" of things. It is, at the same time, the transformation of the revelation of wisdom from beyond the threshold of intelligence — which proceeds, from the point of view of intelligence, so spontaneously and in such a "dogmatic" manner that it appears to intelligence to be complete darkness from the unconscious — into intelligible language and communications that can be assimilated by the intelligence. In other words the unconscious, instead of shocking intelligence, allies itself with it, penetrates it, and becomes luminous within it. But this takes place only after the more-or-less long and painful experience of the crucifixion of consciousness on the cross formed by four opposites: Subjectivity - objectivity, intelligence - unconscious wisdom.



The four elements of this cross correspond to the first three Sephiroth (Kether, Chokmah, Binah) and the "middle pillar" between absolute subjectivity (Kether) and absolute objectivity (Malkuth).

It is this cross where the gradual approach, alliance and, lastly, union of intelligence and unconscious wisdom is effected. At the beginning of this process, intelligence and unconscious wisdom have so little in common that communication between them is reduced almost entirely to dreams, i.e. to the state of consciousness where intelligence, although present, is most passive. Then this communication is extended to the waking state also. The language of communication then becomes that of symbols, including those of the Tarot. Lastly, intelligence and wisdom — no longer unconscious — arrive at such a degree of mutual comprehension that they understand directly without the intermediary of dreams and symbols. It is only then that their union is achieved, i.e. that the state of consciousness that Bergson calls "intuition", and that the Cabbalists identify with "DAATH" is attained. Direct communication between intelligence and wisdom is, truth to tell, only the development of conscience (in the moral sense - Gewissen, conscience, sovest'), which is extended from the domain of action to the domain of knowledge, and is awakened there to the point of becoming the light of intelligence. Conscience has two aspects, notably: a negative aspect (well-known and of which much is made in daily life), which manifests itself as warning disapproving an action before its execution or else as remorse disapproving of an action already committed; and a positive aspect (almost wholly ignored in daily life), which manifests itself as an impulse recommending an action before its execution and as serene joy after its execution. It is above all this positive aspect of conscience which becomes the illuminating and revelatory principle of intelligence, i.e. when the latter unites with unconscious wisdom (which is nothing other than the principle of conscience — Gewissen, conscience, sovest') Therefore intuition is, after all, only the marriage of intelligence (having renounced its

absolute autonomy) with conscience awoken to the point of becoming a source of concrete and precise revelations for intelligence. One could also simply say that intuition is intelligence become entirely conscientious, and that it is conscience become entirely intelligible for intelligence.

Conscience thus offers intelligence as vast a world of inner experience as does the empirical world for outer experience. Intelligence can therefore develop itself and grow in two directions simultaneously — in the direction of the outer empirical world, thanks to the senses, and in that of the inner empirical world, thanks to conscience. Conscience is the door — the sole legitimate and healthy one — to a world at least as vast, and much more profound, than the world that we perceive with the senses. And it is the decision of intelligence to become "the servant of conscience" (ancilla conscientiae) — just as in the Middle Ages philosophy considered itself "the servant of theology" (ancilla theologiae) — which opens this door.

The leading role of conscience in the passage from the "surface world" to the "depth world" has long been known of in the Tradition. It was dramatized and concretized by speaking of the "guardian of the threshold" and of the "meeting" with him. The decisive role was assigned to this meeting, concerning the passage across the "threshold" which separates the "surface world" from the "depth world". Because the admission or rejection of the aspirant depends on this meeting. He who could not bear the truth concerning himself, revealed to him by the "guardian of the threshold" at this meeting, fell back, i.e. decided to content himself with the "surface world" — the world of outer experience and constructions of argumentative intelligence. Whilst he who had the courage and humility necessary to bear the revelation of the truth concerning himself passed the threshold and was therefore admitted to the school of esoteric life, i.e. to the depth world. The "Guardian of the Threshold" figures in the Tradition (including more recent contributions to the Tradition) either as a kind of double incorporating the whole past of the person in question, or also as a Hierarchical Entity of the rank of an Archangel who teaches the lesson of Conscience by means (this is only one means) of projecting the double of the human personality aspiring to the "depth world". The latter conception of the "guardian of the threshold" and of the nature of the meeting with him is more complete and still more true. The Guardian of the Threshold is not a moral bogey for bowling over the "spiritual bourgeoisie", but rather our Elder Brother and Servant of God, who helps us with infinite kindness and superhuman wisdom — although with perfect truthfulness — to advance from the surface to the depths. At least, such is the evidence of the experience of five people of this century known to me.

The Guardian of the Threshold spoken of in the Hermetic Tradition is the Great Judge, charged with preserving the equilibrium of that which is above and that which is below. The traditional iconography of the Church represents him with a sword and a balance. The sword is his vivifying and healing action, giving courage and humility to the soul which hungers and thirsts for the depths, and the balance is his action of presenting the precise account of what must be paid in order to have the right to go further.

It was Maître Philip of Lyons who, as much as any I know, had the most profound comprehension and the most complete knowledge of the practical manipulation of the balance referred to here. He did not tire of repeating:

"Pay your debts! Pay the debts of your neighbors! Because each will pay his debt, and it does not matter if it is paid in this world or in the other, provided that it is paid." (cf. Alfred Haehl, "Vie et paroles du Maître Philippe", Lyon, 1959, and Philippe Encausse, "Le Maître Philippe de Lyon", Paris, 1958)

This is why before healing a sickness he often asked the sick person and the people around him to pay "the price of healing", which he fixed as a certain time of abstention from slander with regard to others, which time he measured according to the case either by hours or by weeks.

Another way of paying debts — one's own or others — is by giving money to the poor or to a good cause. Our ancestors had the right sentiment in leaving money to the poor, to the Church, to hospitals, or in accompanying their novenas of prayer for pardon and for healing by gifts of money paid to the poor or to good causes. They knew instinctively that debts must be paid and that it is better to pay them here than after death. They still had a feeling for the reality of the Balance of the Guardian of the Threshold.

The Guardian of the Threshold spoken of in the Tradition is therefore the Administrator of the Justice of Conscience — and, at the same time, the Master of the School of Conscience. His balance signifies the negative aspect of Conscience, and his sword signifies the positive aspect of Conscience, i.e. the revelatory and healing aspect. One cannot dispense with the meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold when one wants to cross the threshold which separates the "surface world" from the "depth world". It is through the door of conscience that one must enter. And intuition, which reveals the "depth world", is nothing other than intelligence submitted to conscience — submitted from the point of view of being one with it.

Therefore there is no esoteric or occult technique which is able to help us (without speaking of making us) pass from the "surface world" to the "depth world" other than the purely moral act of "sacrificium intellectus" — the sacrifice of intelligence to Conscience. It is the recognition, once and for all, of the primacy of "moral logic" — its superiority to the "formal logic" of intelligence — which effects the passage from the state of reasoning to that of intuition. No exercise whatever for the concentration of attention or for the suppression of mental activity will, alone, help you to attain intuition. No breathing exercise or mental technique of itself will be of any use here. Because in order to attain an aim higher than intelligence and the body, one has to make use of means which are also higher than intelligence and the body. That which is spiritual is achieved only by spiritual means — and these comprise no technique beyond the purely moral act and endeavor.

A strange thing! The Christian Occident, which has developed technique and technology to such an extant on the material plane, possesses hardly any psycho-spiritual "technique and technology", whilst the Buddhist and pantheistic Orient — which has almost entirely neglected material technique — has developed a quite advanced body of psycho-spiritual "technique and technology". It seems that the "technological genius" of intelligence in the Orient is turned towards — and perhaps is exhausted in — the domain of the inner life,

whilst the same "genius" of intelligence in the Occident has exhausted or continues to exhaust its creativity in the domain of external life. The consequence of this is that the spiritual life of the Occident — its mysticism, gnosis and magic — is developed above all under the sign of the principle of Grace, and that the mysticism, gnosis and magic of the Orient are developed above all under the sign of the principle of Technology, i.e. the scientific empirical principle of the observation and utilization of the chain of cause and effects concerning efforts and that which results from them. Thus, for example, the classic work on yoga, the "Yogasutra of Patanjali", recommends, as useful to concentration, devotion to a personal god — to be abandoned later when having lost its utility, i.e. when the yogi will have acquired the aptitude to concentrate himself on the formless and impersonal. "Yoga is the suppression of (involuntary) movements of the mental substance", says the Yogasutra, i.e. according to the law of causality — the chain of cause and effect — it is the suppression of mental movements which is the cause whose effect is yoga or union with the Absolute Being.

Now, St. JOHN of the Cross, who was many times taken up in rapture through — or plunged in — union with the Absolute Being, also spoke in his writings of the state of the complete silence of personal intelligence, imagination and will — the state, therefore, where mental movements are suppressed; but he does not tire of repeating that it is the Divine Presence, of which the soul is enamored, which effects this silence — this suppression of the mental movements — and not the human will. The state of complete silence of intelligence — and, moreover, of the imagination and will — is present in the soul set ablaze by the love of God. There is no psycho-spiritual "technology" here; it is the mutual love between the soul and God which does all.

Thus, here is the difference between the science of psycho-spiritual technique or Raja-Yoga and the "sheer grace" of love in the "night of the senses and the spirit" of St. John of the Cross. The term "sheer grace" which intends to specify this difference, is employed by St. John of the Cross himself. He says in his "Canciones del alma en la noche obscura" ("Songs of the Soul" in "The Dark Night of the Soul"):-

"En una noche obscura
Con ansias en amores inflamada,
Oh dichosa ventura!
Sali sin ser notada,
Estando ya mi casa sosegada."

(One dark night,
Fired with love's urgent longings
Ah, the sheer grace!
I went out unseen,
My house being now all stilled.)*

"My house being now at rest ... (the soul) goes forth into the divine union of love... with the whole household of its powers and desires sunk in sleep and silence".... says St. JOHN of the CROSS in his commentary to the verse. He says elsewhere: "It was a sheer grace for the soul that God had brought it into this dark night, from whence such great good came to it, and into which it would never have been able to enter by itself. Besides, no one would be capable through his own forces alone of disengaging himself from all his tendencies ("the whole household of powers and desires") in order to go forth to God." (St. John of the Cross, "The

*Trsl. K. Kavenaugh and O. Rodriguez, "The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross", London, 1966, p.295

Ascent of Mt. Carmel" I,i,5)
There he indicates the precise difference between the Christian way — the way of purification, illumination and the consummation of union — where there is nothing concerning technique, and that of Yoga which comprises a scale ranging from techniques of physical preparation or Hatha-Yoga to the psycho-mental techniques of Raja Yoga.

There is nothing of technique — here all is Art and Grace — in Christian mysticism, gnosis and magic. And how is it concerning the reciting of the rosary prayer amongst Catholics and the prayer of the heart (the "Jesus prayer") practiced in the Orthodox Church? (The prayer of the heart is the uninterrupted repetition, day and night, with the beating of the heart, of the prayer: Kyrie, Iesou Christe eleison — Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.) Or, again, the Irish monks, who recited each day all the Psalms by heart? Is it not a matter here also of a technique?

The <u>principle of rhythm</u> and <u>that of technique</u> (or maximum effect with minimum effort) differ as biology differs from mechanics, or as a living organism from a machine. The repetition of ages and generations, festivals, the rituals of religious cult, breathing, the beating of the heart, prayer — with respect to the rosary prayer and the practice of the prayer of the heart, and also with respect to the daily recital of the Psalms — are manifestations and applications of the principle of rhythm, whilst, for example, the prayer wheel of the Tibetans, turning in the wind, is the application of a mechanical principle, i.e. the fundamental principle of the technique of minimum effort in order to obtain maximum effect. Rhythm in prayer makes it pass from the psychological domain to that of <u>life</u>, from the domain of personal tendencies and moods to that of the fundamental and universal impulses of Life itself. Speaking in occult terms, here it is a matter of carrying prayer over from the "astral body" or soul body to the "etheric body" or vital body, i.e. of making prayer employ the <u>language of life</u> instead of the language of personal feelings and desires. And just as Life is like a river which flows unceasingly, so does the rosary prayer, for example, flow without stopping — and <u>without fatigue</u>, because that which lives is at the same time <u>vivifying</u>. Calm and rhythmic prayer, prayer-life, <u>does not take</u> forces — it does not tire — but <u>gives</u> forces to the person praying. This is why the anonymous author of the writing "The Way of a Pilgrim" — dealing with the experiences of a Russian pilgrim devoted to the practice of the prayer of the heart — speaks of the experience of plenitude and serene joy which filled him, day and night, giving him a foretaste, already on the earth, of celestial beatitude. It is the same with the practice of the rosary prayer. The one hundred and fifty Ave Marias and the fifteen Pater Nosters of the rosary prayer introduce one to the universal river of spiritual life — which is the proof of a universal prayer — and thus lead one to joyous serenity. The Pilgrim points out — in the third chapter of "The Way of a Pilgrim" — before his experience of the uninterrupted prayer of the heart, and even before he learned of its existence, that in himself and his wife "the wish for prayer was there, and the long prayers that we said without quite understanding did not seem tiring, indeed we liked them. Clearly it is true, as a certain teacher once told me, that a secret prayer lies hidden within the human

heart. The man himself does not know it, yet working mysteriously within his soul, it urges him to prayer according to each man's knowledge and power." ("The Way of a Pilgrim"; trsl. R.M.French, London, 1954, pp.70-71)

It is perhaps this "secret prayer" in the unconscious of the soul which St. Paul has in mind in the Epistle to the Galatians where he says:

"And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying: A b b a, Father!" (Galatians iv, 6)

Now, it is rhythm which unites conscious prayer and this unconscious "secret prayer", and it is as a consequence of their union that prayer-effort becomes prayer-life, i.e. that prayer of the soul becomes spiritual prayer. The rosary prayer, the prayer of the heart, litanies and psalms that are repeated, etc., effect the transformation of prayer-effort into prayer-life. Far from being the means of the mechanization of prayer, they spiritualize it.

Do not be scandalized, dear Unknown Friend, by the fact that you find yourself confronted with the rosary prayer in a Hermetic meditation on the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot — the Arcanum which teaches how to surmount "eclipsed lunar intelligence". Esotericism is not a collection of extraordinary and unknown things, but rather it is above all a less ordinary and less known way of seeing ordinary and known things — of seeing their profundity. And the rosary prayer, wholly "exoteric" and "known to satiety" as it is, reveals profound truths of spiritual life, including that of the union of prayer of the soul and spiritual prayer. It is, moreover, closely related to the theme of the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot: the Arcanum of knowing how to pass from intelligence eclipsed by terrestrial "technicality" to intelligence illumined by the spiritual Sun — i.e. to intuition. In other words, the leap to which Henri Bergson invites our intelligence can be made by saying the rosary prayer. The opinion of a Capuchin friar? It could be, but why can't a Capuchin friar be right, sometimes at least?

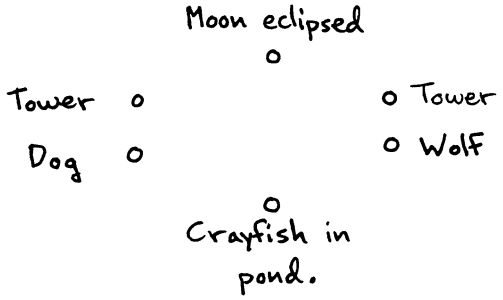
Be that as it may, I declare openly that practical Hermeticism is above all the desire and capacity to learn from everyone and everything. And that "knowing better" is its coffin.

"Knowing better" — the state of consciousness which is present when one has made a review of the totality of efforts made in the past and the results obtained from them, by observing the fixed rules of the game — plunges intelligence into a pond of stagnant water with an exact geometrical border, which encloses it and makes it retreat, like a crayfish, in the face of all that is new and demands creative effort. Intelligence retreats into its element of stagnant water before the antinomy of mental psychism — credulous obedience and critical revolt — as well as the intellectual antinomy of thesis and antithesis, which rises up before it like two stone towers, rigid and immobile in their opposition. And above these antinomies, where the third term — the synthesis — should be found, it sees only a human face, only the projection of human will desirous of an intellectual arrangement so as to disencumber itself of disquieting contradictions. Whilst retreating, whilst refusing to decide to leap or fly either over the "dog" of submission to authority and the wolf of criticism denying all authority, or over the intellectual tower of Babel of theses and that of their antitheses, intelligence nevertheless

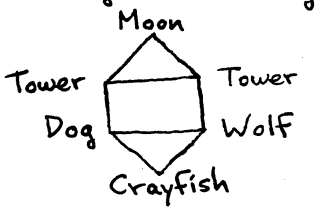
remains ill at ease — because of the imperceptible drops, emanating from the radiation of synthesis eclipsed by the projection of the shadow of arbitrary human will, which fall into its subconscious and constantly disturb it. For although the Moon — intelligence illumined by the Sun — is eclipsed, it nevertheless exercizes a constant influence on intelligence through a kind of rain, whose drops fall into the subconsciousness of intelligence and produce there movement and confused, disquieting noise.

Yes, "knowing better", when it has once taken hold of intelligence, sets it fully in the scene of the Card of the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot — "The Moon". The context of the Card: the eclipsed Moon above, the two towers and the two representatives of the canine species in the middle, and the pond with the crayfish below, says: being confronted with two antinomies — one psychic and one intellectual — you have no other choice than to <u>advance</u>, which means to say, to raise yourself up; or to <u>retreat</u>, which means to say, to sink yourself into a stagnant element! Choose!

This choice being of utmost importance, its environment must be seen as clearly as possible. Therefore, here is the quasi-geometrical figure underlying the situation:



And here is the geometrical figure:



Now this figure — that of a square with two triangles opposed — is <u>magical</u>. Namely, it is the classical figure of <u>sympathetic</u> or hoodoo magic, i.e. the magical operation or magical mechanism which immobilizes the conscious will by means of two antinomies in the horizontal (the square) and an antinomy in the vertical (the two peaks of the opposed triangles). It goes without saying that it is not a matter of "poisonous magic" making use of "aqua Toffana, poisoned nosegays, the shirt of Nessus, and other deadly instruments, still stranger and still less known" of which Eliphas LÉVI speaks under the title of the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot in his "Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie" (trsl. A.E. Waite, "Transcendental Magic. Its doctrine and ritual", London, 1968, p.155). No, it is a matter of something more serious and more profound, namely <u>the Arcanum of intelligence with Conscience eclipsed</u>. It is the Arcanum of the magical mechanism, working behind the surface of the state of intelligence, which aims at explaining movement by the immobile, life by the non-living, consciousness by the unconscious, morality by the amoral. Indeed, how has it happened to mankind that many of its intelligent representatives — even its leaders and directors — have come to see in the brain not the instrument but the producer of consciousness, in chemistry not the instrument but the producer of life, in the economic sphere not the instrument but the producer of culture? How can it be that human intelligence has arrived — in so far as many of its representatives are concerned — at seeing man without a soul and the world without God? What secret and hidden force is at work pushing and forcing human intelligence to say first of all that the essential problems are insoluble — things

transcending the senses and intelligence being unknowable — and then to deny their very existence? In other words, how has it happened that human intelligence finds itself in a state of metaphysical eclipse?

It is sympathetic or hoodoo magic — and it is the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot — which can give us the answer to these questions. "Answer" in this case — and in Hermeticism in general — signifies "enabling one to see" or "opening the eyes". For each Arcanum, in so far as it is an Arcanum, is not a doctrine but rather an event — that of opening the eyes, i.e. the opening up of an inner sense which permits things to be seen in a new way. And this is precisely the matter at hand in the case of the set of problems belonging to the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot.

Human intelligence has undergone the effects of what is no more, nor no less, than hoodoo magic. Its conscious motivating will is immobilized in the square of two antinomies: authority - autonomy and affirmation - negation. In order to come out from this, it has to either retreat into the region of the sub-intelligent or else to advance into the region of the super-intelligent, i.e. to retreat in the fashion of the crayfish in its pond, or to advance by surpassing itself — in rising above itself by leaping or flying — and not to build towers of Babel or to bay plaintively or howl furiously in the way of the dog and the wolf.

Now, it is retreat which has been chosen by many representatives of human intelligence. Others make only plaintive elegies to the romantic past, where intelligence was bathed in the light from above; still others make only thunder and lightning against the errors and sins of the tragic past with its dogmatism and authoritarianism. Others, lastly, unconcerned about what takes place around them in their intellectual environment, continue to build towers of intellectual systems of affirmation or negation, which are of the nature of towers of Babel. Thus, some retreat into the sub-intelligent, i.e. give themselves over to the way of seeing the cause of the advanced and the evolved in the primitive, the cause of consciousness in raw matter, the cause of the rational in the irrational, and the cause of the moral in the amoral; whilst others pour themselves out in elegies concerning the golden age of the past, or angrily make thunder and lightning concerning its imperfections; whilst, lastly, still others build intellectual towers of Babel founded on theses of affirmation or negation, chosen from the darkness of the inner ceiling of the skull, and eclipsing revelatory and directing consciousness.

One begins to see and to expect only the projection of the primary and elementary impulses of human nature: pleasure (Freud), the will to power (Nietzsche, Adler), material and economic concerns (Marx). The projection of the terrestrial element of human nature onto the nocturnal luminary — moral consciousness — causes its eclipse. One no longer sees anything worthwhile and one also no longer expects anything worthwhile.

The eclipsed Moon with the human face instead of reflected solar light... the arid plain with two towers and with a dog and a wolf howling from below... the pond with stagnant water geometrically enclosed and shielding the crayfish — doesn't the totality of this imagery at first evoke troubling feelings, and then disquieting ideas relating to a far-reaching operation of hoodoo magic whose victim is human intelligence?

Indeed, with Kant the limits of intelligence were brought to light, i.e. he

demonstrated the fact of its imprisonment, and he addressed thinking humanity with the grave warning that one can formulate in the language of imagery of the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot as follows:- "The nocturnal luminary is eclipsed! You find there the face of a man instead of the pure light of cosmic objective truth! One can escape the prison of this eclipse only by turning to the moral consciousness of the transcendent Self!" Since Kant, the fact of the spellbound state of intelligence has increased more and more in significance and certainty — up to the present day. In this Letter we have quoted Henri Bergson fully because he demonstrated this in an extremely lucid and well-founded manner, but Henri Bergson was not alone in ascertaining the subjective imprisonment of intelligence and making appeal to coming out of it. Whatever the divergence in their views and in other respects may be, Schopenhauer, Deussen, Vladimir Soloviev and Nicholas Berdyaev — to name only the well-known names — are in agreement in that which concerns the theme of the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot. Hegel even advanced a new metaphysical logic — the dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis — which is, fundamentally, only the re-affirmation of the intellectual aspect of the Hermetic method of the "neutralization of binaries" that one finds in alchemical treatises and with Jacob Boehme, Saint-Martin, Fabre d'Olivet, etc., which aims at intelligence coming out of its prison and raising itself to "objective knowledge" by means of intellectual intuition. In our time Pierre Teilhard de CHARDIN has advanced an objective "dialectic of Evolution" which is no longer simply intellectual, but which is rather a way of seeing chemical, biological, psychic, intellectual, moral and spiritual processes in evolution, which proceeds according to an objective dialectic, i.e. everywhere ascertainable, and through all means of experience — of divergence, of convergence and of emergence. This is no longer an aspect of Hermeticism, but is Hermeticism pure and simple — including Mysticism, Gnosis and Magic, as well as all experience of the physical world, as a unity.

The fact that human intelligence is spellbound is therefore not only recognized but also much effort is being made — and has already been made — towards freeing it. The question still remains with respect to the "technique" of the hoodoo magic whose proven victim is intelligence.

The "technique" in question is summarized by a single word: d o u b t. Doubt — dubium, Zweifel, so-mnenie, etc. — is the state of consciousness faced with an antinomy, i.e. two theses which seem to it to be equally well-founded and which contradict one another. KANT, for example, formulated four fundamental antinomies: 1) The world has a beginning in time and a limit in space — The world has no beginning in time and is infinite in space; 2) Substance consists of simple units — Nothing in the world consists of simple units and there is nothing in the world which is simple; 3) Determinism according to Nature's laws of causality is not the only kind that exists, for there also exists the determinism of causality having its source in freedom — There is no freedom, everything is determined by natural causality; 4) The world presupposes an effective cause which is a necessary being - There does not need to be any being, either in the world or beyond the world, which is its effective cause. In other words, the antinomies of the creation or the eternity of the world, of the simplicity or the infinite complexity of matter, of freedom or absolute determinism, of theism or atheism are those which confront intelligence and are able to reduce it to impotence, i.e. to paralyze it, according to KANT. Leaving aside the question as to whether the Kantian antinomies are the only ones, or

the most essential ones, they suffice to demonstrate the discouraging and therefore paralyzing effect of antinomies on intelligence, no matter whether they are real or false. Now, the "technique" of hoodoo magic acting on intelligence which has taken place in the history of the human race consists, in the first place, in having put it in the presence of antinomies — real or false — which discourage it and paralyze it, i.e. which make it stop and give up progressing forward in the direction towards the profound. Then this effort is intensified by the demonstration of the subjective relativity of the solutions to these antinomies and of the contradictory nature of these solutions: that it is, in the last analysis, only taste which determines for the authors of philosophical systems the foundation, structure and architecture of their intellectual edifices. The idealism of PLATO, the realism of ARISTOTLE, the rationalism of DESCARTES, the monadism of LEIBNITZ, the monism of SPINOZA, the pessismistic voluntarism of SCHOPENHAUER, the optimistic voluntarism of FICHTE, the dialectical absolutism of HEGEL, etc. are merely works of intellectual poetry whose differences depend only on the taste and talent of their authors — this is the second constituent element of the operation of hoodoo magic with regard to human intelligence. Lastly, once ensnared in doubt, intelligence *sees* in illumination from above only manifestations of elements of human psychology — the "face of man" on the "Moon" — and cannot see otherwise. Is the soul immortal? Or is it the desire for self-preservation which is manifested by this thesis? Is man a microcosm? Or is it the desire to be important which is at the root of this idea; progress, evolution? Ideas conceived of to render suffering, toil and death bearable; G o d? An idea which guarantees that all will end well; K a r m a? This idea appeases, if not consoles, the blind, the deaf and the dumb; the celestial hierarchies? One is afraid of emptiness and therefore it is necessary to people a heaven with beings similar to us.

Thus, instead of asking if this or that thesis is true, intelligence comes to occupy itself with psychological motives hidden behind the so-called "game of rationalization" fashioning intellectual superstructures. It projects the "face of man" on the Moon and sees there only this face.

In this connection I must say that there are two categories of people with whom I have had the greatest difficulty in conversing, with any profit, during my life: these categories not being those of people who either passionately affirm or who passionately deny in the intellectual domain, but rather the two categories of people who accept everything with a tolerance which appears perfect — that of the psychologizers and that of the spiritualizers. For you cannot speak with psychologizers about objective things and truths in the world and in life: they would understand these only as psychological manifestations that they accept as indisputable, although interpretable, "psychological facts". Therefore you cannot arrive at agreement, nor be in disagreement, with a psychologizer concerning things of the world and of life, since, if you speak of the Moon, he will see only your face on the Moon — if not his own. No more can you speak with a spiritualizer, i.e. with someone who holds that his higher and true Self is identical with God — the higher and true Self of the World — and who consequently sees and understands only manifestations of this same absolute, universal and eternal truth which is revealed — it alone — relatively in all philosophical and religious opinions. Just as the psychologizer projects his lower human self onto the luminary illumining the darkness of the depths of the world and life, so does the

spiritualizer project his human higher self onto the same luminary. The one projects the human psychic face there and the other projects the human spiritual face — but it is, in both cases equally, the human face which is projected there. Say to a spiritualizer that Jesus Christ was the son of God incarnated — he will reply to you that it is true since in Jesus Christ was realized the universal and eternal truth of the identity of the true higher Self with God. Then say to him that the Incarnation was an act of sacrifice of divine love, — and he will say to you that it is true since love is the identity of all individual "selves" in the universal Self of God, and that each individualization comprises one incarnation and must necessarily be an act of sacrifice on the part of the higher, universal Self. If you then say to him that it was the victory over death, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which signifies the uniqueness of the work accomplished by Jesus Christ, he will reply to you that there is no reason in the world to deny the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, since the higher and Universal Self can always project mental images — by maya-shakti — to the point of making them appear visibly. Lastly, isn't the whole world a manifestation of mental force which renders the invisible visible? — And if you say that Pentecost was the result of the work of Jesus Christ, he will reply to you — with evident benevolence — that to be sure it was Pentecost which necessarily had to to result from the work of the avatar Jesus Christ, since it was Pentecost where his disciples, also, realized the universal and eternal truth of the identity of all individual "selves" in the Higher Universal Self — which is manifested by the fact that their speech became that of the Higher Self of each person who listened to them. And if you say lastly — desperate as you are to come, at least, to a disagreement with your interlocutor — that there is evil in the world, that the Fall took place and that there is original sin, he will say to you that without any doubt there is the Fall and original sin, since the illusion of a plurality of individual consciousness has been arrived at, whilst they are identical and one in the consciousness of the Universal Self. A Fall was therefore certainly necessary to arrive at such an illusion.....

Thus the spiritualizer as well as the psychologizer are not people to converse with about things concerning the world and life; they look at — and consequently see — only the face, either psychic or spiritual, of man. Here it is the effect of the Arcanum of the Moon eclipsed by the face of man that is at work.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the intelligence of those who do not want to see the world as a display of human subjectivity and who, on the other hand, cannot or do not know how to make the leap of intelligence of which Henri BERGSON speaks — that their intelligence is turned towards the "objective facts of the five senses". And hence the retreat into the framework of the pond with the crayfish of the Card of the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot. The operation of magical enchantment — the bringing into play of antinomies and the projection of the face of man onto the luminary called to illumine the enigmas and secrets of the depths beyond the threshold of consciousness — i.e. of the Night — has attained its aim by making intelligence retreat in the face of heaven, and even from the surface of the Earth, into a region situated beneath the surface of the Earth — that which underlies the "facts of the senses", symbolized in the Card by the pond with the crayfish.

What, therefore, is the state of intelligence which has abandoned "all metaphysics" and has

decided to hold to and to limit itself solely to "objective facts of the senses"?

What is most characteristic of this state is that intelligence no longer moves forwards but backwards. It looks to the least developed and the most primitive for the cause and explanation of what is most developed and most advanced in the process of evolution. Thus, it looks for the effective cause of the world not in the heights of creative consciousness but rather in the depths of the unconscious — instead of going forward and elevating itself towards God, it retreats into Matter. It does something with regard to the world which would be absurd with regard to a work of art, namely to explain it through the qualities — or rather the quantities — of the materials of which it consists, instead of the style, the context, the meaning and the intention which the work of art reveals. Wouldn't it be absurd to want to understand one of Victor Hugo's poems, for example, by chemically analyzing the ink with which it had been written and the paper on which it was written, or by counting the number of words and letters? Nevertheless, this is precisely what the intelligence under consideration does with regard to the world — the world in which Victor Hugo's poem makes up only a part and is only a single special case of the manifestation of the great process of the creation.

Now the moment has arrived to conclude our meditation on the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot. Here is the conclusion that it asserts:

Of the four H a y o t h of the Cabbala, the four "Sacred Animals" of Hermeticism — the Eagle, the Man, the Lion and the Bull — we find three amongst the signs of the Zodiac, i.e. the Bull, the Lion and the Man or Waterbearer. But we do not find the Eagle. The Eagle's place in the zodiacal circle is occupied by the Scorpion. There, where the Eagle, the principle of elevation, ought to be, the Scorpion, the principle of retreat and suicide, is found. Now, the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot is that of the Eagle and the Scorpion — the Arcanum of the replacement of the one by the other. Because the crayfish of the Card of the Arcanum "The Moon" has the scorpion as its prototype — and as its aim. Intelligence which prefers retreating to flying must inevitably arrive at the impasse of absurdity — for example, the absurdity that we have pointed out above. And the absurd, this is suicide for intelligence. This is where "crayfish-intelligence" goes after having renounced becoming "eagle-intelligence".

The XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot asks us: Do you want to choose the way of the eagle which rises above antinomies or the way of the crayfish which retreats before them until arriving at complete absurdity, i.e. at the scorpionic suicide of intelligence? — This is the point — i.e. the message to the human will — of the XVIIIth Major Arcanum of the Tarot.

- - - - - E n d of the XVIIIth Arcanum - - - -

XIXth Meditation on the Major Arcanum of the Tarot —
"The Sun" —
"Le Soleil"

"When I began drawing the mandalas, however, I saw that everything, all the paths I had been following, all the steps I had taken, were leading back to a single point — namely, to the mid-point. It became increasingly plain to me that the mandala is the center. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the center, to individuation." — (C.G. JUNG, "Memories, Dreams, Reflections"; trsl. R. and C. Winston, London, 1967, p.222)

"I knew that in finding the mandala as an expression of the Self I had attained what for me was the ultimate. Perhaps someone else knows more, but not I." (C. G. JUNG, op. cit., p.222)

Cor Jesu, Rex et centrum omnium cordium...
(Heart of Jesus, King and center of all hearts...)
(Litany of the Sacred Heart)

I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.
(Revelation xxii, 13)

Under the combined influence of men's thoughts and aspirations, the Universe around us is seen to be knit together and convulsed by a vast movement of convergence. Not only theoretically, but experientially, our modern cosmogony is taking the form of a cosmogenesis... at term of which we can distinguish a supreme focus of personalizing personality... Just suppose that we identify (at least in his "natural" aspect) the cosmic Christ of Faith with the Omega Point of Science: then everything in our outlook is clarified and broadened, and falls into harmony. (Pierre Teilhard de CHARDIN, "Christianity and Evolution"; trsl. R. Haque, London, 1971, p.180)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The preceding Arcanum — "The Moon" — confronted us with the task of human intelligence to liberate itself from the magical enchantment which separates it from spontaneous wisdom, and to unite itself with the latter, i.e. to arrive at intuition. The XIXth Arcanum — "The Sun" — is that of the accomplished union of intelligence and spontaneous wisdom — the Arcanum of intuition.

Intuition is what results from the intimate and profound alliance of intelligence and spontaneous wisdom. Now, the Card of the XIXth Arcanum represents two children placed under the Sun, where the one puts his right hand on the neck of the other as if he wanted to draw his

head near to himself, whilst the other touches with his left hand the place on the body of the first where his heart is to be found. These two children thus represent intelligence endowed with childlike confidence with regard to the spontaneous wisdom of the heart, and spontaneous childlike wisdom which uses the language of the heart and which tends to draw the attention of the head, i.e. intelligence, to what it has to say. The image is therefore of two children united by bonds of a reciprocal confidence without reserve — where the one indicates and the other understands — placed under the Sun. One could hardly better represent the relationship of intelligence and spontaneous wisdom brought into play in intuition than as it is in the Card of the Arcanum "The Sun". For this relationship presupposes such purity of intention as is found only with a child, and it postulates such reciprocal confidence, without a shadow of doubt or suspicion, which belongs naturally to children. Lastly, this relationship excludes tendencies to domination and authority — to pose as a pontiff and to pride oneself on the eminence of the guru or master whose favors one enjoys — which tendencies are also foreign to a child.

"The children who are fraternizing under the Sun correspond all the better to Gemini because this zodiacal constellation brings in the longest days to us" — says Oswald WIRTH ("Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge", Paris, 1927, p.208), thus locating the XIXth Arcanum in the zodiacal circle of twelve cosmic mysteries or, speaking in the language of C.G. Jung, in the circle of twelve archetypal force-images of the collective Unconscious which work in the depths of every human soul. For the Zodiac is that which the human soul knows unconsciously; it is the book which the soul once "ate" and which is present and active only in his "bowels" — in the depths of his being — from whence it renders him strong or weak, fertile or arid, fervent or tepid, according to whether he is in harmony or not with its teaching-impulse.

Now, the teaching-impulse called "Gemini" can be expressed by paraphrasing a little the first statement of the Emerald Table of Hermes:-

> "May that which is below be as that which is above, and may that which is above be as that which is below to accomplish the miracles of one thing."

This is the principle of analogy put into practice, taking its point of departure from the principle of cooperation. It is the opposite of that of the struggle for existence advanced by Charles DARWIN as the principle of evolution called "Sagittarius". Nature furnishes us at the same time with a great number of proofs of the principle of cooperation in the process of evolution — perhaps as many proofs as there are of the struggle for existence. The proofs are of a kind such that one could uphold the principle of cooperation to be worthy as the directing principle of natural evolution with the same justification as the principle of struggle may be upheld. Indeed, is it the struggle for existence within an organism — let us say the human body — which explains the effect of the activities of billions of biological units — cells — in the organism or, rather, is it their cooperation?

Don't the cells of the muscles, the nervous system, the glands, the blood, etc., cooperate rather than struggle? And isn't the life and health of this whole organism due to this cooperation?

Bees and flowering plants cooperate. Air, light and plants cooperate in photosynthesis, where the miracle of the transformation of inorganic matter into organic matter takes place — where "stones" are transformed into "bread". And, lastly, if mankind had not cooperated more than it had struggled, it would not only not have achieved the international civilization of our time but it would probably have been annihilated.

There is therefore no doubt that the principle of cooperation has at least the same rights to be considered as the directing principle of evolution as that of the struggle for existence advanced by Darwinism. In other words, the diurnal principle of Gemini plays a role at least equal to the nocturnal principle of Sagittarius in natural evolution.

One of the highest aspects of the principle of Gemini, the principle of cooperation, is that which is present in intuition: that of the cooperation between spontaneous wisdom and intelligence. Here it is a matter of a state of consciousness where intelligence advances from formal knowledge to material knowledge, i.e. from knowledge of the relationships of things to knowledge of the things themselves. Now, knowledge of things themselves entails two functions: on the one hand what Henri Bergson happily designates as sympathy, and on the other hand a sustained and profound deepening in that with which the sympathetic relationship is established. In other words, one has to enter into a contact of essential sympathy (i.e. from essence to essence) first of all, and then not to glide off to other contacts of the kind, but to <u>dwell</u> in this sympathy so as to result in sufficient intensity and clarity in order to be able to say, in all honesty, that in fact an act of material knowledge has taken place. Here is a concrete example:

You venerate (i.e. you love and respect) a non-incarnated being — a departed person, a saint, or a hierarchical being — in a disinterested manner. Your veneration — which includes love, respect, gratitude, the desire to conform etc. — cannot fail to create an invisible link of sympathy with its object. It may be in a subtle and dramatic way, or rather in a slow, gradual and almost imperceptible way — this does not matter — the day will come when you will experience the <u>presence</u>. Not a fluidic, semi-electrical presence close to you in space — as in the apparition of a phantom or a ghost — but a breath of radiant serenity, of which you know with certain knowledge that the source from which it emanates is not at all in you. It influences you and fills you but it does not take its origin in you; it comes from outside of you. Just as you know, in drawing near to a fireplace, that the warmth that you feel does not arise from you, but rather from the fireplace, so also do you feel that the breath of serenity in question is due to an objective presence. Here, therefore, a relationship of sympathy is established. After this it is up to you to remain silently concentrated so that the relationship established is subsequently developed, i.e. that it gains in intensity and clarity — that it becomes a <u>meeting</u> in full consciousness. The meeting is thus the realization of the relationship when it is borne to the limit of the intensity of clarity. According to the case, it can take either the character of a "conversation through

forces" or that of a "conversation through words". In the former case it is not precise and articulated thoughts or images which are communicated to you, but rather "forces" or impulses — spiritual and psychic seeds impregnated germinally with moral ideas and judgements. In the case of the "conversation through words" a revelation of articulated thoughts and representations takes place. The revelation to the Shepherds at Bethlehem can be considered as a prototype of the meeting whose character is "conversation through words" and the experience of the mages of the Orient — who "saw the star of the king of the Jews in the East" but who had to ask at Jerusalem: Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? — is an example of the meeting whose character is "conversation through forces"."The star" of the king of the Jews gave them certainty concerning the coming of Christ and gave them the impulse to go and search where he was awaited, but it did not give them information with respect to the place and parents, whilst to the shepherds of Bethlehem it was revealed that "to you is born <u>this day</u> in the <u>city of David</u> a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger", i.e. precise and complete information was given to them with respect to time, place and external circumstances.

Now, the meeting whose character is "conversation through forces" always resembles the experience of the "Star" of the mages from the East, and that whose character is "conversation through words" always resembles the experience of the shepherds of Bethlehem. The "Star" does not speak, it <u>moves</u>; and it leaves to the subject of its revelation the work of research in the domain of intelligence and facts. The meeting whose character is "conversation through words", in contrast, moves <u>and</u> teaches — it bears also on the domain of intelligence and facts. It <u>guides</u>.

I am not in a position to say which of the two forms of revelatory meeting is more frequent or which is objectively preferable, although subjectively that of the shepherds of of Bethlehem seems to me preferable to that of the mages of the Orient. Be that as it may, <u>intuition</u> — understood as the alliance of <u>active</u> wisdom and <u>active</u> intelligence, which is the theme of the <u>XIX</u>th Arcanum of the Tarot and which not only underlies Hermeticism but is its very reason for existence — presupposes the <u>cooperation</u> of two principles and therefore falls in the category of the revelation whose character is "conversation through forces". Just as the mages from the Orient made a long journey and brought presents to the Child, in following the "Star", so also Hermeticism is on the way from century to century to arrive at the Manger — not to arrive there with empty hands, but to place there the presents which are the fruit of the millennial-old effort of human intelligence which follows the "Star".

The Manger . . . where the mages from the Orient and the shepherds of Bethlehem meet, of which the octogenarian C. G. JUNG said — in calling it a "Mandala" —

> "that all the paths I had been following . . . were leading back to a single point — namely, to the mid-point" and that "it became increasingly plain to me that the

Mandala is the center. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the center, to individuation" (C.G. Jung, "Memories, Dreams, Reflections"; trsl. R. and C. Winston, London, 1967, p.222).

And of this Pierre Teilhard de CHARDIN said that "under the combined influence of men's thoughts and aspirations, the Universe around us is seen to be knit together and convulsed by a vast movement of convergence. Not only theoretically, but experientially, our modern cosmogony is taking the form of a cosmogenesis... at the term of which we can distinguish a supreme focus of personalizing personality..." (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Christianity and Evolution"; trsl. R. Hague, London, 1971, p.180)

The Manger — the center, the individuation of the Psyche, the supreme focus of the personalizing personality of the Universe, or the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word in History, worshipped by the mages from the East and by the shepherds of Bethlehem — is this not the center of the movement of convergence, in time and space, of all efforts and all aspirations of those who have endeavored throughout the centuries to transform the base into the precious, to listen to and to understand the message of the stars, to raise their problems to Angels, Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim so as to consult them, and to guard and not forget the memory of all the altars and chalices of the past? In a word, is this not the centre also for Hermeticists?

The Star which Hermeticists follow leads them to the Manger — to the center of History, to the center of the psychic life — individuation —, to the center of universal evolution or the "supreme focus of the personalizing personality", to the Alpha and Omega of Revelations, to the Heart which is the center of all hearts. For there is a center of gravitation of hearts, just as there is a center of gravitation of the planets. Like the latter, it causes the "seasons" of the life of the soul. This is why it is not without reason that the Manger is venerated by the Church each year and that a unique light is lit in the world each Christmas. What I want to say is that Christmas is not only the festival dedicated to the memory of the historical nativity of Christ but that it is in addition the event of the nativity which is repeated each year, where Christ becomes Child anew and where the history of mankind becomes the manger. Then all that which is in us of the nature of the shepherds of Bethlehem and all that which is in us of the nature of the mages from the East responds as in the past. That which is in us of the nature of the mages from the East is enamored of the Star and sets out en route with the little Incense, Myrrh and Gold gathered during the year which is drawing to an end; and that which is in us of the shepherds of Bethlehem kneels down before the Child whose reality and presence is revealed from above. -- The annual repetition of the nativity of Christ as a real event on the spiritual plane — like those of his Miracles, his Passion, his Resurrection and Ascension — means to say that just as the external Sun eternally repeats springtime, summer, autumn and winter, so does the spiritual Sun reveal his eternal springtime aspect — his Infancy — at Christmas, his eternal summer aspect — his Miracles, his eternal autumnal aspect of the Passion and the Resurrection and his eternal winter aspect of the Ascension. This means to say, again, that the ages are eternal — that infancy, youth, middle age and old age are eternal. The Christ is eternally Child, Master, Crucified and Resurrected. Man

bears in himself at one and the same time the child, the young man, the mature man and the old man. Nothing of the past is lost or destroyed; the past simply passes from the stage into the wings — from the framework of the conscious to the domain of the unconscious from where it operates in a no-less active way. It is the same with past epochs and civilizations of human history; they have not disappeared, but are present and active in the instinctivity of our epoch and civilization. It is to the great merit of C.G. Jung that he discovered the presence of the remote past in contemporary psychic life and established the existence of "archeological layers" in human psychic life — just as archeology did for the material objects of past civilizations and as paleontology did for material fossils of the biological past. Thanks to the work of C.G. JUNG, "psychological excavations" can be added to archeological and paleontological excavations — and can come to their aid. The difference between the vestiges of the past with which archeology and paleontology work and the "psychic layers" of the past established by Jung is that the latter are <u>living</u> — although outside of the framework of consciousness dominated and determined by intelligence — whilst the materials of archeology and paleontology are <u>dead</u>; they are only skeletons of the past.

The sense of <u>the idea of resurrection</u> (the theme of the following Major Arcana of the Tarot, Arcanum XX) is the actualization of all the fullness of all spiritual, psychic and corporeal forces in latent being (latent is from the Latin latere: <u>to be hidden</u>), i.e. where they have withdrawn from the domain of action and intelligence to one of latent energy and the unconscious (in Jung's sense of the word!) — the domain, in other words, that we call "the past" but which, according to Henri BERGSON, who traced out a footpath for Jung, forms a part of indestructible <u>duration</u> and is therefore revivable or <u>recallable to the present through memory</u> (if it is a matter of the human psychic life) or <u>through resurrection</u> (if it is a matter of divine cosmic memory). Resurrection is thus the divine analogy of the act of human memory. Just as man, by remembering, evokes or actualizes the part of duration that we name "the past", so does God actualize that which has become latent and evokes to consciousness that which lives in the domain of the unconscious by an analogous magical act to that of human memory. The "resurrection of the dead" is therefore when God "remembers" the whole fullness of past duration. It is the act of divine magic whose human analogy is memory.

Now, it is resurrection which is the Good News of Christianity. For this reason the history of Christianity is — and will be — that of the resurrection of all that which is worthy of resurrection from the past of the history of mankind and the world: it is — and will be — the history of a series of "renaissances" in the manner of the renaissance of Greco-Roman philosophy and arts which took place at the end of the Middle Ages. This "renaissance" will be followed by others, including that of ancient Egypt and Chaldea. Modern evolutionism and "cosmism" are its dawn. The renaissances in question are only the first degree of Resurrection: they bear on the spiritual life and realize — or restore — its continuity, i.e. its <u>spiritual duration</u>. Another series of "renaissances" will re-establish psychic continuity and will signify the degree of resurrection <u>of the life of the soul</u>. This will be followed by the resurrection of the <u>body</u> — which will be its completion.

Complete resurrection, i.e. that of the body, is therefore preceded by the spiritual and the psychic "resurrections" — where <u>duration</u> is re-established on earth — where memory triumphs

over forgetfulness. And the history of Christianity is, in the last analysis, the history of these triumphs.

It is the same with the liturgical year of the Church. This is simply the yearly endeavor of human memory to unite itself with divine memory so as to realize resurrection, i.e. to make the past live in the present. The words of consecration: This is my body, which is given for you; do this in memory of me — is the key to the liturgical year. One does these things in memory of Him, his Mother, the Apostles, Saints and Martyrs — and He, and his Mother, and the Apostles, Saints and Martyrs are present and living and acting in the present. The whole liturgical year says to us: Do not forget. Remember, for it is through Memory that resurrection is accomplished.

All the festivals of the year aim at resurrection. And that of Christmas is the resurrection of the Child who was worshipped by the shepherds of Bethlehem and the mages of the Orient. But it is at the same time the festival of the resurrection of the shepherds and mages also, i.e. the time of the magical evocation of the spiritual and psychic forces made use of by Revelation and Gnosis. For just as the Child is present at Christmas, so also there is an awakening and activation at Christmas of forces — including individual souls — capable of receiving His revelation, be it from Angels or from the stars. It is thus that it happens that Hermeticism also undergoes each year the rejuvenating and inspiring effect of Christmas, and that Hermeticists — often without being aware of it — receive vivifying impulses and illuminating inspirations for their efforts. The mystery of the Star is thus repeated.

But those who follow the Star must learn a lesson once and for all: not to consult Herod and the "chief priests and scribes of the people" at Jerusalem, but to follow the Star that they have seen "in the East" and which "goes before them", without seeking for indications and confirmation on the part of Herod and his people. The gleam of the Star and the effort to understand its message ought to suffice. Because Herod, representing the anti-revelatory force and principle, is also eternal. The time of Christmas is not that of the Nativity of the Child alone; it is also the time of the massacre of the children of Bethlehem — the time where autonomous intelligence is driven to kill, i.e. to strangle and push back into the unconscious, all the tender flowers of spirituality which threaten the absolute autonomy arrogated to itself by intelligence.

May those who follow the Star do so completely and without reserve! May they not seek — once having the Star before their eyes — scientific confirmation, approval or sanction, or, what would be still worse, direction on the part of science! May they follow the Star above them and nothing else! Noblesse oblige.

There is a recent example from which everyone can learn: namely, how Carl Gustav JUNG followed the Star without ever seeking support from outside. Dear Unknown Friend, read his autobiography "Memories, Dreams, Reflections" ("Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken" — Rascher Verlag, Zürich and Stuttgart, 1963) — and you will know what the crux of the matter is for those who follow the Star; you will know that a whole world is at stake underlying the exhortation: follow the Star above you and nothing else!

I have in mind here the spiritual biography of Jung, the intimate history of his work, which gives a model example of a Hermeticist — a mage from the Orient — who followed the Star all his life, and followed the Star alone. I do not have the results of his work in mind, which are able to satisfy or not. They do not satisfy me, I confess, but what right have I to demand of Jung that he should have gone further than he did? What he has done he did in a way which can serve as a model for everyone — the model of a method carried to perfection. The essential is not the presentation to the world of the results of Jung's work, but rather his method of working. I

mean to say that it is: the method of "free association", where the first Arcanum of the Tarot — that of "concentration without effort" — finds its application; the method of interpretation of dreams and of spontaneous fantasy — which is the application of the second Arcanum of the Tarot; the method of cooperation between the fertilizing unconscious (outside of and beyond normal consciousness) and fertilized consciousness — which corresponds to the third Arcanum of the Tarot; the method of the amplification of immediate data from the manifestation of the unconscious by means of alchemy, myths, and mysteries belonging to mankind's historical past — which is an application of the fourth Arcanum of the Tarot; the method of psychic healing which consists in making the patient understand the warnings of his unconscious and accept the latter as his guide and master — where the fifth Arcanum of the Tarot is put into practice; the method of passing courageously through unparalleled temptations and conflicts of duties by making decisions according to the "arrow" of inspiration and not according to a code of rules of conduct — which is the sixth Arcanum of the Tarot; and, lastly, the method of not identifying oneself with the superhuman forces of Archetypes — not allowing them to take possession of individual consciousness (so that the latter does not become a victim of inflation) — which is the application of the seventh Arcanum of the Tarot... With respect to the XIXth Arcanum of the Tarot, we find it again in the work of Jung in the guise of the active cooperation of intelligence and transcendental revelatory being, which cooperation is not only the mature fruit of the work of his long life, but also it is the principal thesis of his method of work in the domain of depth psychology, which he openly advanced and maintained. The intuition postulated by Henri Bergson as necessary in order to be able to understand life and the world was practiced by Jung in order to understand and to heal the life of the human soul. He did not commit the error of the mages of the Orient. He did not consult Herod and his people.

Another example of faithfulness to the Star is the life and work of Father Pierre Teilhard de CHARDIN. This mage from the Orient followed the Star on a long voyage: through the paths of the universal evolution of the world throughout millions of years. What did he do, properly speaking? He showed the Star above the universal evolution of the world, in a way that the latter "is seen to be knit together and convulsed by a vast movement of convergence" at the term of which "we can distinguish a supreme focus of personalizing personality". Darwinian evolution — this nightmare of a struggle for existence of species without number in life's feverously multiplying endeavor, blind and groping, to produce that which is most viable — has therefore become henceforth the way leading to personalization, a movement which has direction and aim. Teilhard de Chardin, in having perceived the Star above Darwinian evolution, has crowned the latter with this guiding-Star and has thus transformed it from the nightmare of rampant production attempting to produce the viable into the way towards the manger. In following this Star, he did not let himself be turned aside from the path indicated by it — neither by enemies of the new from the camp of Religion nor by enemies of the transcendental in the camp of science: the "sanctioners" and the "scribes" of Herod. It was to his faithfulness to the Star that he owed the singular force of his soul which allowed him to be a faithful son of the Church and at the same time a conscientious worker for Science — and to remain so until his last breath. He never revolted against or broke with the Church and Academia. Having been loyal to them with his whole heart until the end, he therefore comes under the beatitude

of the Sermon on the Mount: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God!

In writing of the force of soul resulting from faithfulness to the Star, the force which manifests itself in the power to resist the weakness of revolt — for revolt is a weakness where one lets oneself be carried away by the current of emotional impatience, the fundamental weakness of all rebels, including religious reformers as well as political revolutionaries and the most celebrated social reformers — and in the power to procure peace between two aspirations which are — or are believed to be — opposed to one another, it is difficult for me not to pay homage to two Hermeticists of our century, notably Francis WARRAIN and Dr. Paul CARTON, both avowed Hermeticists. The former followed the Star through the study of Law, through creative work in the domain of sculpture, through the metaphysics of Hoéné WRONSKI, through mathematics, logic and Charles HENRY's psychophysics, through the Cabbala and Jacob BOEHME. "By combining as much as possible the resources of the intuitive mode proper to Antiquity with the instruments put at our disposal by the discursive method," he defined the essential conditions for an intermediary gnosis allowing the antinomy between the Absolute and the Relative — between faith and reason — to be correctly resolved. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God!

Paul CARTON followed the Star as a naturopathic doctor and as a Christian supernaturalist, along the narrow way between the Natural and the Miraculous, which way is that of Hermeticism, pure and simple. His book "La Science Occulte et les Sciences Occultes" (Brevanne, Seine-et-Oise, 1935), where the Major Arcana of the Tarot are also the object of study, bears witness to his life's endeavor to unite the Divine Supernatural and the Human Natural through the intermediary magic of the Hermetic tradition. Again: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God!

Intuition is therefore the cooperation of human intelligence with superhuman wisdom. It is what creates the link — or the "intermediary gnosis" and "intermediary magic" — between the Absolute and the Relative, between the Supernatural and the Natural, between faith and reason. Now, intuition can be developed only by people who have faith and who have reason. It is reserved for believing thinkers. Whosoever believes and does not think will never attain it. Whosoever thinks and does not believe will never have the certainty of transcendental things that intuition alone can give.

Intuition combines two certainties: essential certainty (that of essence), and consistent certainty (that of consistency). The former is of a moral order; its force of conviction resides in the Good and the Beautiful. The latter is of a cognitive order; its force of conviction resides in consistency in the vision of the relationships of things. Intuitive certainty is therefore "faith at first hand" combined with "intelligence at first hand". Let us explain this. There faith founded on extrinsic authority — a person, an institution, a book, etc. — and there is faith founded on intrinsic authority — the inner and intimate experience of the divine breath, and the direct impression of the divine realm. The latter is first hand. There is still a third kind of faith — the most heroic, perhaps — the "intermediary faith" between faith founded on extrinsic authority and that founded on the intrinsic authority of inner experience: this is postulative faith, where one believes without any support, either from without or from within. It is the faith of "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Matthew iii,3) — the voice itself of the soul who cries, i.e. postulates in complete solitude, i.e. in the wilderness, the things without which it could not live. The three postulates of KANT: freedom of will, the immortality of the soul, and God, are such a cry of the soul in the wilderness. For they are founded neither on extrinsic authority nor on mystical experience, but rather on semi-structural exigencies of the soul itself. It is the reality of hunger and thirst alone which bears witness to the existence of bread and water. "Freedom, immortality and God" — or the desperate night of nothingness — such is the cry from Kant's soul in the desert where he found himself.

Such was also the faith of John the Baptist before he had the experience of the descent of the Spirit from heaven upon Jesus, at the baptism in the Jordan. His faith, which is summed up by the conclusion of his sermon, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew iii, 2), was a cry in the wilderness, i.e. the voice of supreme hunger and thirst for the kingdom of heaven. And it is precisely this faith which made John the Baptist the first "eye-witness", so to say, of the reality of the descent of the kingdom of heaven, and which made him the first human being to recognize the Christ. His faith was crowned with experience. John the Baptist became one who saw.

Now, it is postulative faith become faith at first hand or mysticism which arrives at the perfect certainty of intuition as a consequence of the help of intelligence. John the Baptist still had need of this latter in order to have complete certainty. For this reason he — who had seen the Spirit descend upon Jesus — sent two disciples to Jesus to ask him, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

And Jesus had to reply in the framework of intelligence alone:

> "The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the good news preached to them" (Matthew xi).

In other words, Jesus said that these phenomenal effects indicate consistency between the revelation of the descent of the Spirit experienced by John the Baptist and the manifestation of this Spirit through Jesus Christ. It is the language of intelligence, pure and simple, which Jesus makes use of in order to fill the gap in John the Baptist's consciousness — which required the help of intelligence. And it was because of this gap that Jesus Christ said of John the Baptist that, although a prophet, he is "more than a prophet" and that "among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist, yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he". For the kingdom of God brings with it the absolute certainty of the cooperation of faith at first hand and intelligence — it is the <u>kingdom of intuition</u>.

This is why the Master made appeal not only to faith but also to intelligence, not only to essential certainty but also to consistent certainty, by stating the fundamental principle of intelligence — judgement by effects, knowledge of things by their fruits:

> "Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So, every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit" (Matthew vii, 16-18).

This is the briefest and most complete characteristic of intelligence and its role. Its role is immense, if one considers that intelligence is called to constitute an integral part of intuition which, in its turn, determines greatness and smallness in the kingdom of God.

This role was understood in the Middle Ages in the ecclesiastical milieu of the West. Believers set themselves to thinking. Scholasticism thus took its birth. It is not true that scholasticism is due to the desire to intellectualize faith and to replace it by philosophy — that it owes its birth to secret doubt in the hearts of believers of the Middle Ages. No, what is at the root of scholasticism is the <u>desire for the fullness of intuition</u>, i.e. that of "baptizing" intelligence and winning its cooperation with faith. It was thus a matter, truth to tell, not of

doubt, but of an act of ardent faith which did not at all doubt that human intelligence is also as "baptizable" and "Christianizable" as the heart and the will. St. Albertus MAGNUS and St. Thomas AQUINAS were in no way impelled by doubt when they set out upon their grandiose work of thought; they were full of confidence that the Blood of Calvary would penetrate, warm and transfigure the domain of the cold clarity of thought that there was up until then. Their work was apostolic rather than apologetic. Just as missionaries went to non-Christian countries in order to bear the good news there, so did St. Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas go to the non-Christianized land of human intelligence in order to Christianize it. Was this doubt? Indeed no! It was an act of apostolic faith and apostolic zeal!

Dear Unknown Friend, do not scorn medieval scholasticism. It is, in truth, as beautiful, as venerable and as inspiring as the great cathedrals that we have inherited from the Middle Ages. To it we owe a number of masterpieces of thought — thought in the light of faith. And, like all true masterpieces, those of medieval scholasticism are beneficial. They heal the disorientated, feverous and confused soul. Just as a doctor prescribes for certain physical illnesses a change of climate and air — a sojourn of several months in the mountains — so it would be right and beneficial for him to prescribe to many a person disturbed by "existential problems" and troubled by the "contradictions of life" that he should remove himself for some time into the climate of high scholasticism and breathe there pure air from mental mountains. It is not a matter of a conversion to scholastic philosophy, i.e. that the person in question embraces the scholastic doctrine, but rather of a more elevated intellectual niveau and — above all — of continuous work for some time with the clear and precise notions of scholasticism on this elevated niveau.

Perhaps the "quinque viae", the five ways of reasoning, of St. Thomas Aquinas will not necessarily convince you, but you will emerge from meditative work on the five arguments (proposed to prove the existence of God) with a clear head and a calm heart, well-prepared and equipped to seek and find other ways to certainty. It is the occupation with these five ways of reasoning which will render you stronger and more calm, which will elevate you above all the entanglements due to the confused play of complexes which are a mixture of feelings in which personal preferences assert themselves and thoughts which are only a mouthpiece for these preferences. And it is this elevation above psychological complexes which is the salutary effect — even the healing action — of occupation with scholasticism, when one reads in the style of scholastic meditation.

One could object: Why not mathematics? Doesn't mathematics have the same effect of detachment and elevation above personal psychological limitations?

Without doubt mathematics also has a salutary effect. But it does not so engage the whole human being as does the totality of scholastic problems, so consequently its salutary effect does not have the same significance. What is at stake with scholasticism is God, the soul, freedom, immortality, salvation, good and evil. The triumph over psychological factors here is something quite different than triumph over the same psychological factors through occupying oneself with quantities and their functions alone. Scholasticism has more at stake

than mathematics and in consequence its salutary effect is of greater significance. Therefore, do not despise medieval scholasticism, dear Unknown Friend, it is still of value.

No more is it true that the mystical impulse from the end of the XIIIth and into the XVIIth century was purely and simply a reaction against the "dry intellectualism" of scholasticism. No, the flowering of mysticism during this epoch was the fruit and the result of scholasticism, prefigured in the spiritual biography of St. Thomas Aquinas himself. Notably, St. Thomas towards the end of his life arrived at mystical contemplation of God and the spiritual world and said, on returning from this ecstasy, that his written works now appeared to him "like straw". Indeed, he wrote nothing after this.

The believing thinker thus became a seeing mystic. And this transformation did not take place in spite of his work of scholastic thought, but rather thanks to it — as its fruit and its crowning glory.

Now, what happened to St. Thomas Aquinas also happened to a group of individuals who formed the crest of the wave of scholasticism. Just as St. Thomas, through scholastic reasoning, arrived at contemplation, so did part of advanced scholasticism arrive at mysticism, i.e. at the aim of scholasticism, which is intuition or the state of union of faith and intelligence. Meister ECKHART, RUYSBROECK or, lastly, St. JOHN of the CROSS are spirits amongst whom you will search in vain for a spirit of opposition to scholasticism. For them also it was true that scholasticism was "like straw", but they knew at the same time from their own experience that this straw proved to be an excellent combustible. They certainly surpassed scholasticism, but they did so by attaining its aim. For the aim of scholastic endeavor is contemplation, and it is mysticism which is the fruit of the scholastic tree.

The mystics of the epoch under consideration were individuals who signified a successful outcome of the scholastic endeavor, i.e. in them intelligence was baptized and Christianized. The missionary work with regard to "pagan" intelligence undertaken by St. ALBERTUS Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas was crowned with success in the guise of the mystical impulse which followed high scholasticism. The marriage of faith and intelligence was consummated and believers and thinkers were reinforced by a third group: that of the people of intuition.

Thus, dear Unknown Friend, do not at all despise medieval scholasticism, but make use of it not only to re-establish the health of your soul, but also — by thinking in the light of faith — to arrive at intuition, without which Hermeticism is something merely literary, of doubtful literary value. It lives only from intuition, and without intuition it is something dead. And it is this dead thing alone that is seen by people of faith and people of science, who are sincerely astonished that there are people who take it seriously. They see only scientific and religious tinsel or, at most, a weak faith which borrows crutches from science or, perhaps, a childlike science which has not yet learned to distinguish between what one believes and what one knows. And they are not at all mistaken: without the invisible cement of intuition, Hermeticism is indeed only an improvised assemblage of heterogeneous elements of science and religion. It suffices to indicate the following analogy: it was neither the straw of the Crib, nor the animals that were present, which guided and enabled the mages from the

East to find the Child, but rather the Star in heaven. Similarly, in Hermeticism one will find only straw and animals if one is not guided by its Star, which exists only for intuition. Now, it is the XIXth Arcanum of the Tarot which invites us to occupy ourselves quite especially with the Star of Hermeticism in the heaven of intuition. What is this Star? The ZOHAR says:

> "Elohim made the two great lights.. Originally, the two lights, intimately united, gave off an equal splendor. The names.. "Jehovah" (Lord) and "Elohim" (God) had then a complete equality. Both of the two lights bore the wholly identical names: "MATSPATS MATSPATS" (מצפץ). These same two lights rose simultaneously and held a place of equal rank. But... the Moon humbled herself by diminishing her light, and renounced her place of higher rank. From that time she has had no light of her own, but derives her light from the sun. Nevertheless, her real light is greater than that which she gives off here below; for a woman enjoys no honor save in conjunction with her husband.
>
> The great light (the Sun) has the name "Jehovah" and the lesser light (the Moon) has the name "Elohim", which is the last of the degrees and the close of thought.
>
> Originally, Elohim was inscribed above among the letters of the sacred name (Y H V H), which are four in number; it was only after diminishing herself that she took the name of Elohim. But her power is manifest in all directions: "E L" — God — presides over the day and "I M" (I (A) m m e r) — over the night, and "H É" in the middle participates on the one side and on the other". (Z o h a r, Bereshith, 20 a; compare also with the English translation by H. Sperling and M. Simon in "The Zohar", vol. i, London-Bournemouth, 1949, pp. 84-85)

It is left to us only to cite another passage from an ancient source — from the XIth book of APULEIUS' Transformations — in order to have all the elements necessary to grapple, sufficiently equipped, with the problem of "the Star" of Hermeticism and "The Sun" of the XIXth Arcanum of the Tarot. Apuleius summarized his great vigil at the temple of I s i s, the "arcana of the sacred night" (noctis sacratae arcana), in the following way:

> "I approached the very gates of death and set one foot on Proserpine's threshold, yet was permitted to return, rapt through all the elements. At midnight I saw the sun shining in its brilliant radiance; I entered the presence of the gods of the under-world and the gods of the upper-world, stood near and worshipped them."
> (Apuleius, "Transformations: The Golden Ass"; trsl. R. Graves, Penguin, 1950, p. 286)

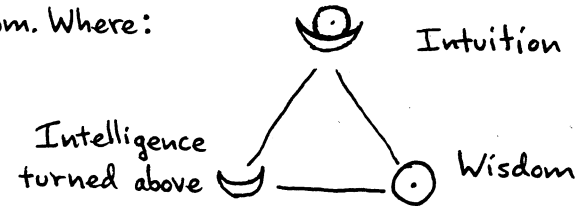
Let us now seek for the reality, having in view the above-cited passage from the ZOHAR and the statement made by Apuleius. The Zohar tells us that the Moon "renounced her place of higher rank" — that of equality with the Sun — and that "from that time she has had no light of her own, but derives her light from the Sun; nevertheless, her real light is greater than that which she gives off here below". Here below, therefore, the Moon reflects the light of the Sun, whilst above — where her name is E L H I M — "her power is manifest in all directions: E L presides over the day and I M — over the night, and the H in the middle participates

on the one side and on the other".

Now, the Moon, in so far as she is the nocturnal luminary here below, reflects the Sun, but in so far as she is the nocturnal luminary above, she shines with her own light, and it is the Sun which reflects her. In other words, the Moon is "solar" above and "lunar" here below, whilst the Sun is "solar" here below and "lunar" above. It is in this sense that E L, the radiant part of the Moon's Name above — "presides over the day": it is the visible Sun — reflecting the invisible Moon during the day. Similarly, the visible Moon reflects the Sun (become invisible) during the night. The spiritual Moon is therefore the Sun which shines at midnight. And it is the spiritual Moon — or Isis-Sophia — that Apuleius "saw shining at midnight in its brilliant radiance". For the long vigil in the Isis temple resulted in a vision of the cosmic principle of Isis, i.e. the spiritual Moon or the "Sun at Midnight".

All these things, although presented to us in mythological clothing, relate to the profound reality of the relationship of intelligence and wisdom, and their union — intuition. For intelligence corresponds to the Moon, wisdom — to the Sun, and intuition — to the restoration of the "intimate union of the two luminaries". Here below intelligence reflects wisdom — or, if it is eclipsed (Arcanum XVIII) it reflects the terrestrial world of external experience. But there is another intelligence above, a transcendental intelligence, whose "light is greater than that which it gives off here below", and which — united intimately to wisdom — is "inscribed above among the letters of the sacred name, which are four in number", and which shines in the middle of the night "in its brilliant radiance". This higher intelligence, this "Sun at Midnight", which is the conjunction of the spiritual Sun and spiritual Moon — or, in other words, the intimate union of intelligence and wisdom — is the Star of Hermeticism, and it is the Sun of the XIXth Arcanum. The Sun of the XIXth Arcanum is the "Sun at Midnight", i.e. the Sun that Apuleius "saw shining at midnight in its brilliant radiance", and it is this Sun which is the Star of Hermeticism across the ages. It is the principle of intuition, or the intimate union of transcendental intelligence and wisdom.

The Arcanum of intuition is therefore that of knowing how to raise to creative intelligence the intelligence which reflects, and how to effect its union with wisdom, i.e. that of the work of re-establishing, firstly, the union of the intelligence of diminished light here below with the intelligence of complete light above and, then, the union of intelligence thus reunited with divine wisdom. Where:



The triangle shows in a most clear way what the relationships are: intelligence, attracted by wisdom, does not unite itself to the latter on the plane of reflection, but raises itself to the creative plane, where it regains its higher "non-fallen" status and unites with wisdom, the result of which union is intuition. Therefore it is not thanks to the suppression of intelligence, or by becoming less intelligent, that intuition is attained; but rather, on the contrary, it is thanks to its intensification — until it becomes creative and is thus united to its higher, transcendental aspect, after which it is united to wisdom. It is therefore by becoming more and more

intelligent that one arrives at intuition — although there is another way, that of "sunstroke" or the annihilation of intelligence by the brilliance of wisdom, which is the theme of Arcanum XXII or ZERO: "The Fool". We shall therefore return to this in the 21st Letter on the Major Arcana of the Tarot.

But those who hold to the tradition of Hermeticism — that of Mysticism, Gnosis, Magic and Hermetic Philosophy — keep away from the way of "divine folly" (yurodivost — in Russian; Narrheit in Gott — in German) and follow the way indicated by the parable of the talents (Matthew XXV, 14-30), where the master entrusted his servants with a number of talents, each according to his ability, so that they should put them to good account. Thus, they raise intelligence to a level at which it becomes capable of uniting with wisdom; they render it of maximum account — which is intuition.

Just as the impulse of scholasticism, on the historical ladder of western civilization, did not lead to a perfect system of scholastic philosophy, but rather to mysticism, so does individual intelligence, on the ladder of individual development, lead to intuition and not to a state where it knows all and explains all. Intelligence is not the absolute aim; in developing, it is transformed into intuition. It is called to effect the passage from argumentative reasoning to comprehensive intuition.

In relation to the theme of the mission of intelligence being the way to intuition, it is relevant to indicate the fact that the philosophical work of Immanuel KANT — which scorched the pretentions to certainty of autonomous intelligence with respect to metaphysical things by demonstrating the set limits of knowledge possible to autonomous intelligence — has had an effect comparable to that of wind, which extinguishes the weak fire and which revives the strong fire: the one becoming sceptics and the other becoming mystics. KANT put an end to the speculative metaphysics of autonomous intelligence and opened up the way to a mysticism which non-autonomous intelligence or "practical reason" ("praktische Vernunft") is capable of — Kant's "practical reason" being intelligence united to the wisdom of moral nature, i.e. intuition. Indeed, several times I have had occasion to observe the fact that with time Kantians become mystics — to name, for example, the German philosopher Paul DEUSSEN, the author of a synthesis of Kantianism, Platonism and the Vedanta (cf. Paul DEUSSEN, "The Elements of Metaphysics"; trsl. C.M. Duff, London-New York, 1894).

DEUSSEN's fundamental thesis is that the incapability of autonomous intelligence attaining to the noumenon behind the phenomenon (demonstrated by Kant) entails the task of resorting to intuitive perception of the essence of things, which is manifested in Platonism and in the Vedanta. It was probably with a view to showing the working of the intuitive method that Deussen translated and published sixty Upanishads from the Vedas ("Sechzig Upanishads des Vedas", Leipzig, 1897).

But let us return to the Star of Hermeticism — to the Midnight Sun — which is the Sun of the XIXth Arcanum of the Tarot.

The Zohar and Apuleius have helped us to understand an important aspect of this Sun, namely that of the "intimate union of the Sun and Moon" — or wisdom and intelligence — in the guise of the Midnight Sun. A third ancient document can now help us to place ourselves in the presence of another important aspect of the problem occupying us, and presents it to us in its

entirety. This is the Apocalypse of St. John, where we read:

"A great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the Sun, with the Moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. (Revelation xii, 1)

The Zohar and Apuleius speak of the Moon and the Sun joined or the sign which is the sign of Isis. We find this sign again in the apocalyptic vision of the woman enveloped by by the Sun and with the Moon under her feet. But the apocalyptic vision adds here a third element: the twelve stars.

In other words, intelligence united to wisdom in intuition still does not signify the achievement of the work of the reintegration of consciousness, if it is not crowned by a third element, which corresponds to the "stars" just as intelligence corresponds to the "moon" and wisdom to the "sun".

What, therefore, is this third element?

In order to understand its role and nature it is still necessary for us to look at — and this time more closely — the experience of spirits who turned from intellectualism to intuitionism, as we indicated above in speaking of the effect of the work of Kant. We mentioned the German philosopher Paul Deussen, but perhaps it would be more to the point to mention his master, the German philosopher of worldwide renown — Arthur SCHOPENHAUER. For it was he, author of the celebrated book "The World as Will and Representation", who made the decisive step from Kant's thesis (that phenomena hide the essence of things, and that the essence remains inaccessible to intelligence as such) to the intuitive introspection of the essence of one thing — the Self — a thing that represents and contains the other things of the world. This intuitive introspection allowed him to arrive at the conclusion that it is the will which is the essence of things, and that things are only representations of the will. Therefore, the world is, according to Schopenhaver, a unique will which represents or "imagines" the multiplicity of things. And as Schopenhaver found that the same experience gave rise to almost the same conclusion in Indian mystical philosophy — above all in the Vedanta, based on the Upanishads of the Vedas — he said: "The Upanishads were my consolation in life, and they will <u>also</u> be so in *death*" (Die Upanishads waren mein Trost im Leben; sie werden es auch im Tode sein).

Thus, the mystical philosophy of India is the original and prototype of the intuitionist philosophies of the West — such as that of Schopenhaver, Deussen and Eduard von HARTMANN (cf. "Philosophy of the Unconscious"; trsl. W.C. Coupland, London, 1931).

Let us there examine the fundamental experience and principal conclusion to be drawn from the mystical philosophy of India, as represented by the Vedanta of the Advaita (non-dualist) school.

This philosophy is founded on intuitive introspection — as method. This is based on the one hand on experience of the will as the element underlying all intellectual, psychological, biological and mechanical movement, and on the other hand on the experience of the "inner eye" or detached transcendental Self, which observes the movements produced by the will. The will creates the multiplicity of mental, psychic, biological and mechanical phenomena, in contrast to the unity of "the Seer in seeing" (the transcendental Self). The transcendental Self does not move, therefore it does not change, therefore it is immortal, therefore it is not an entity separated

from the real essence of the world, and thus it is one with it. The true Self of man and the essence of the real world — or God — are identical. "A h a m B r a h m a a s m i" (I am Brahma) — this is the formula which gives a summary of the experience and conclusions drawn by the Vedanta.

Now, it suffices on the one hand not to identify with the will and its movements and on the other hand to identify with the transcendental Self, "the Seer in seeing", in order to attain to the Real Being and Essence of the world in the intuitive experience of Vedanta adherents and German intuitionist philosophers.

But one could ask: is the intuitive experience of the transcendental Self truly final and complete, so that nothing follows it or surpasses it? Is the experience of the transcendental Self truly the "nec plus ultra" ("the ultimate") of knowledge?

Indeed, it lacks something important: the whole spiritual world, i.e. the Holy Trinity and the nine spiritual hierarchies. The "great portent" of which the Apocalypse speaks indicates beyond the Sun and the Moon a crown of twelve stars on the head of the Woman.

The intuitive experience of the transcendental Self — sublime and stimulating as it may be — does not suffice, alone, to let us perceive, and to render us conscious of, the spiritual world. The union of the "Moon" and the "Sun" alone, in the human spiritual microcosm, still does not signify the experience of the spiritual macrocosm. It is not sufficient to elevate oneself to the transcendental Self; it is necessary, still further, that this transcendental Self perceives and becomes conscious of other "transcendental Selves" — many of which are higher than it. The transcendental Self of man, as eternal and immutable as it is, is not the ultimate summit in world evolution. The transcendental Self is not God. It is in his image and after his likeness, according to the law of analogy or kinship, but it is not identical with God. There are still several degrees on the ladder of analogy which separate it from the summit of the ladder — from God. These degrees which are higher than it are its "stars" — or the ideals to which it aims. The Apocalypse specifies the number of them: there are twelve higher degrees than that of the consciousness of the human transcendental Self. It is necessary, therefore, in order to attain to the O N E God, to elevate oneself successively to degrees of consciousness of the nine spiritual hierarchies and the Holy Trinity. The conclusion of the Vedanta — "Aham Brahma asmi", declaring the identity of the transcendental Self and the One God — is therefore an error due to a confusion of values. Here the image and likeness of God is taken for God, and experience of the Divine, likewise, is taken to be God himself. All which glitters is not gold — and all which is transcendental and immortal is not God. For the Devil, also, is transcendental and immortal.

This confusion can easily take place if one keeps exclusively to the empirical psychological method, whilst avoiding the principle of transcendental metaphysics. Thus even C. G. JUNG only narrowly missed identifying his psychological experience of the seventh "archetype" — the (transcendental) Self (das Selbst) — with what religions call "God". It was only thanks to his prodigious prudence that he had, though, left a door open and did not go as far as to pretend to have had a psychological experience of God. Then again, consider disciples of the Sankya (or Samkhya) metaphysical school, concerning which Krishna said: "Fools, not wise men, say that Samkhya (renunciation of action to know God) and Yoga (pursuit of action living in God) are

distinct. He who practices one, fully earns the fruits of both. The place which the follower of Samkhya obtains is also gained by the followers of Yoga. He sees truly who sees the Samkhya and the Yoga as one and the same." (Bhagavad-Gita v, 4-5; trsl. M.N. Dutt, Bhishma Parva xxix 4-5 in "The Mahabharata" vi, Calcutta, 1896, p. 38) They have, therefore, the same experience of the transcendental Self as yogis and Vedantins, yet without arriving at the conclusion that the transcendental Self is God. On the contrary, thanks to the principles of their metaphysics, they recognize the plurality of individual "purushas", i.e. the plurality of "transcendental Selves". Thus, the same experience can give rise to different — even contrary — interpretations, if one applies different directing metaphysical principles. Yoga and Samkhya are "one and the same" with respect to the experience of the transcendental Self, but they differ radically with respect to the intrepretation of this experience: the "men of Yoga" believe that with it they have attained God, whilst the "men of Samkhya" do not pretend to have achieved anything other than the experience of the individual transcendental Self, the individual purusha or monad — in the sense of LEIBNITZ's term.

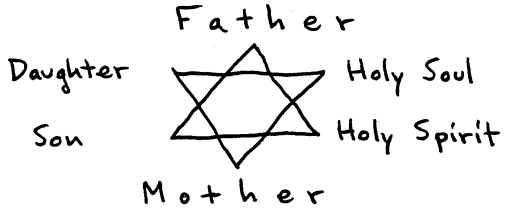
One could also say, in the symbolical language of the Bible, that Yoga attains to union (=Yoga) of the two luminaries — the Moon (or intelligence) and the Sun (or spontaneous wisdom of the transcendental Self) ((the "H A" or principle of the Moon and the " T H A " — the principle of the Sun -- HA-THA-YOGA))-- and halts there, whilst Samkhya also attains this, but it takes account of still a further kind of "luminary": the stars (higher entities of the spiritual world). Samkhya, whilst leaving the door open to that which transcends the "transcendental Self", does not occupy itself with it, it is true, in an explicit manner — which has given it the qualification of "atheistic". However, its "atheism" does not amount to its denying the existence of a universal Purusha higher than all individual purushas (it professes to know nothing of this with certain knowledge), but rather to its denying the affirmation of Yoga (and of the Vedanta) that the "transcendental Self" i s G o d.

In contrast, Judeo-Christian Hermeticism, which ranges itself on the side of Samkhya with respect to the negation of the identification of the "transcendental Self" with God, is intensely occupied with the third "luminary" — the stars — in the three aspects of Astrology, Angelology and Trinitarian Theology, which aspects correspond to the Body, Soul and Spirit of the third "luminary". Judeo-Christian Hermeticism is thus the sustained effort across the centuries to know and understand the three luminaries in their unity - i.e. to know and understand the "great portent which appeared in heaven — a Woman clothed with the Sun, with the Moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev. xii, 1). It is the Woman in this apocalyptic vision who unites the three "luminaries" — the Moon, the Sun and the Stars, i.e. the luminaries of night, day and eternity, and it is She — the "Virgin of Light" of the P i s t i s S o p h i a, the Wisdom sung of by Solomon, the Shekinah of the Cabbala, and the Mother, the Virgin, the Pure Celestial Mary — who is the Soul of the light of the three luminaries, and who is both the source and aim of Hermeticism. For Hermeticism is, as a whole, the aspiration to participation in knowledge of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the Mother, Daughter and Holy Soul. It is not a matter of seeing the Holy Trinity with human eyes, but rather of seeing with the eyes — and in the light — of M a r y - S o p h i a. For just as no one comes to the Father but

by Jesus-Christ (John xiv, 6), so does no one understand the Holy Trinity but by Mary-Sophia. And just as the Holy Trinity manifests itself through Jesus Christ, so understanding of this manifestation is possible only through intuitive apprehension of what the Virgin-Mother of Jesus Christ understands of it, who not only bore him and brought him to the light of day, but who also was present — present as mother — at his death on the cross. And just as Wisdom (Sophia) — as Solomon said — was present at the Creation ("when he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep... then I was at work beside him" (Proverbs viii, 27-31)) and "built her house... set up her seven pillars", so Mary-Sophia was present at the redemption and "was at work beside him", and "built her house... set up her seven pillars", i.e. she became Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. For the Seven Sorrows of Mary correspond, for the work of the Redemption, to the seven pillars of Sophia for the work of Creation. Sophia is the Queen of the "three luminaries" — the Moon, the Sun and the Stars — as the "great portent" of the Apocalypse shows. And just as the Word of the Holy Trinity became flesh in Jesus-Christ, so did the Light of the Holy Trinity become flesh in Mary-Sophia — the Light, i.e. threefold receptivity, the threefold faculty of intelligent reaction, or understanding. Mary's words: "Mihi fiat secundum verbum tuum" ("let it be to me according to your word") are the key to the mystery of the relationship between the pure Act and pure Reaction, between the Word and Understanding, between, lastly, Father, Son and Holy Spirit on the one hand and Mother, Daughter and Holy Soul on the other hand. They are the true key to the "seal of Solomon" or hexagram:-

This symbol is not at all that of good and evil, but rather it is that of the threefold pure Act or "Fire" and the threefold pure Reaction (the threefold "Mihi fiat secundum verbum tuum") or "Light of Fire", i.e. "Water". "Fire" and "Water" signify that which acts spontaneously and creatively on the one hand, and that which reacts reflectively on the other hand — the latter being the conscious "yes" or light of "Mihi fiat secundum verbum tuum". This is the "elementary" meaning of the "seal of Solomon" — elementary in the sense of the elements "Fire" and "Water", taken on their highest level.

But the still higher meaning that this symbol hides — or rather reveals — is that of the Luminous Holy Trinity, i.e. that of understanding of the Holy Trinity. Then it is the hexagram given here:



And these two triangles of the Luminous Holy Trinity are revealed in the work of Redemption accomplished through Jesus-Christ and conceived through Mary-Sophia. Jesus-Christ is its agent; Mary-Sophia is its luminous reaction. The two triangles reveal the Luminous Holy Trinity in the work of Creation accomplished by the creative Word and animated by the "yes" of Wisdom-Sophia. The Luminous Holy Trinity is therefore the unity of the triune Creator and the triune Natura naturans (free Nature) — the unity of the threefold "Fiat" and the

threefold "Mihi fiat secundum verbum tuum" which reveals itself in Natura naturata (necessitated Nature), in the world created before the Fall. It is the triune Divine Spirit and the triune Soul of the World manifesting in the Body of the World — in Natura naturata.

The Zohar puts forward the idea of the Luminous Holy Trinity. It teaches that the great name of God Y H V H reveals the Father (Y = י), the supreme Mother (H = ה), the Son (V = ו), and the Daughter (the last Hé of the Name YHVH). Such is the eternal name, but in the history of the created world there are also revealed the S h e k i n a h (identified with the "Community of Israel") who is the true "Rachel weeping for her children" (Matthew ii,18), who weeps in exile and who is the "beautiful virgin who has no eyes" (Zohar, 95a); the Messiah-king who "descends and reascends through all the heavens in order to exercise, with all the prophets who are to be found, the universal function of salvation" (L. Schaya, "L'homme et l'absolu selon la Kabbale", Paris, 1958, p.96); and the R u a c h hakodesch (the holy "Breath" or Holy Spirit), of which S a a d y a speaks, through the intermediary of which the thirty-two ways of Wisdom are incorporated in the air that one breathes — the holy breath by means of which God is revealed, to the prophets, at the foundation of the secret of creation and which is called the "breath of the living God" (רוח האלהים חיים) (cf. Henri Sérouya, "La Kabbale", Paris, 1956, p.136). The Messiah is the seventh term or principle of the hexagram Father, Son, Holy Spirit; Mother, Daughter, Holy Soul or Shekinah or "Community of Israel"; He is the agent of all, the active summary of the bi-polar Trinity or, as we have called it, the Luminous Trinity. With respect to the concrete manifestation of the Shekinah, "it is as a woman that she now appears to the visionaries among the Cabbalists, like Abraham HALEVI, a disciple of LURIA, who in 1571 saw her at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem as a woman dressed in black and weeping for the husband of her youth" (G.G. Scholem, "Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism", London, 1955, p.230). The weeping Lady of La Salette also wept at the foot of a wall no less real than the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem — the wall of universal sin which is placed between humanity and divine grace — but she differs from the Shekinah of the visions of the Cabbalists and Hassidim in that she is not the personification of a principle, i.e. she is not solely an aspect of the divine, but rather is a human person who existed in the flesh at the bosom of the visible community of Israel twenty centuries ago, just as the Messiah, whom many have seen and met during the last twenty centuries, is no more only a spirit who "descends and reascends through all the heavens in order to exercise, with all the prophets who are to be found, the universal function of salvation", but rather is a human person who existed at the bosom of the visible community of Israel twenty centuries ago. For just as the Word became flesh in Jesus-Christ, so did the Bath-KOL, the "Daughter of the Voice", become flesh in Mary-Sophia. The Church worships her as the Virgin, as the Mother and as the celestial Queen, corresponding to the Mother, the Daughter and the "Virgin of Israel" of the Cabbala, and to the sophianic trinity of the Mother, the Daughter and the Holy Soul, as we have mentioned above.

The Athenians, also, had an analogous feminine triad, which played the principal role in the mysteries of Eleusis: Demeter — the Mother, Persephone — the Daughter, and "Athena the bringer of Salvation" (cf. Olympiodorus, "In Platonis Phaedonem commentaria" = "Commentary on the Phaedo of Plato"; ed. W. Norvin, Leipzig, 1913, p.111) — where Athena was at the same time the

"community of Athens" or the "soul of Athens" as it were, analogous to the "Virgin of Israel".

Historical analogies and metaphysical parallels alone, however, do not suffice to attain the complete certainty of intuition: it is for the heart to say the last decisive word. Thus the following "argument of the heart" proved to be decisive, twenty-five years ago, to the one who writes these lines.

There is nothing which is more necessary and more precious in the experience of human childhood than parental love; nothing more necessary, because the human child, alone, is not viable if it is not taken from the first moments of its life into the circle of care of parental love or, lacking parental love, its substitute — charity; nothing more precious, because the parental love experienced in childhood is moral capital for the whole of life. In childhood we receive two dowries for life, two assets from which we can draw during the whole of life: the vital biological asset which is the treasure of our health and vital energy, and the moral asset which is the treasure of health of soul and its vital energy — its capacity to love, to hope and to believe. The moral asset is the experience of parental love that we have had in childhood. It is so precious, this experience, that it renders us capable of elevating ourselves to more sublime things — even to divine things. It is thanks to the experience of parental love that our soul is capable of raising itself to the love of God. Without it the soul could not truly enter into a living relationship with the living God, one of loving God — being unable to pass beyond the abstract conception of God as the "architect" or the "first cause" of the world. For it is the experience of parental love — and it is above all this — which renders us capable of <u>loving</u> the "architect" or "first cause" of the world as <u>our Father</u> who is in heaven. Parental love bears in itself true senses of the soul for the Divine — which are, by analogy, eyes and ears of the soul. Now, the experience of parental love consists of two elements — the experience of maternal love and that of paternal love. The one and the other are equally necessary and equally precious. The one and the other render us capable of raising ourselves to the Divine. The one and the other signify to us the means of entering into a living relationship with God, which means to love God, who is the prototype of all paternity and all maternity.

Now, love teaches in its own way — with a certainty which excludes all doubt — that the divine commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother" is truly <u>divine</u>, that it is significant in heaven as well as on earth. "Honor thy father and mother" is applicable therefore not only to transitory things but also to eternal things. Such is the commandment revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai, and such is also the commandment emanating from the depths of the human heart. One should honor the Father who is in heaven <u>and</u> the celestial Mother. This is why practicing believers of the traditional Church, i.e. the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, caring little for the difference stated in dogmatic theology between the celestial Father and Mother, love and honor — in their practice of prayer — the celestial Mother no less than the Father who is in heaven. Dogmatic theologians may well put believers on their guard against "exaggeration" in the domain of Mariology and Protestant critics may well advance criticism of the cult of the Virgin Mary as "idolatry", but practicing believers of the traditional Church continue and will always continue to honor and love their celestial Mother as the eternal Mother of all that lives and breathes. If one says that the heart has its own reasons, which the intellect does not know, one can also say that "the heart has its own dogmas, which theological reasoning does not know". Indeed this

dogma of the heart, although as yet not formulated — being generally confined to the domain of the unconscious — nonetheless exercises a growing influence on the guardians of dogmatic orthodoxy of a kind such that the latter are constrained to give way, through the centuries, one position after another to this irresistible impulse: in liturgical forms and in the practice of prayer sanctioned by ecclesiastical authorities, the role accorded to the Virgin Mary does not stop growing. The Queen of the Angels, the Queen of the Patriarchs, the Queen of the Apostles, the Queen of Martyrs, of Confessors, of Virgins, of all the Saints, and the Queen of Peace is, in the texts of liturgical prayers, also the Mother of God, the Mother of divine Grace, and the Mother of the Church. In the churches of the Greek Orthodox Church one sings: "More honored than the Cherubim, more glorious than the Seraphim — thou who art the true Mother of God, we honor thee". Now, the Cherubim and the Seraphim are the first celestial hierarchy and the Holy Trinity alone is above them. This "dogma of the heart" is so powerful that the time will come when it will result in official recognition from the Church and will be formulated. For it is thus that all Church dogmas have arrived, in the past, at their promulgation: they live first of all in the hearts of the believers, then influence more and more the liturgical life of the Church, in order — lastly — to be promulgated as formulated dogmas. Dogmatic theology is only the last stage of the way of dogma which begins in the depths of the life of souls and results in ceremonious promulgation. This way is exactly what is understood by "the direction of the Church by the Holy Spirit". The Church knows it and has the patience to await — even for centuries — the time when the work of the Holy Spirit will have attained to maturity.

Be that as it may, whatever the duration of time for the mysterious process of the birth of the dogma raising maternal love to the level of the Holy Trinity may be, it is already well formulated and is at work across the centuries. All the same, it is a matter, whilst respecting the law of patience and abstaining from all attempts to force things, of cultivating feelings and ideas relating to divine maternal love and of meditating on the ancient Hermetic doctrines which reveal the mystical, gnostic and magical meaning of this aspect of divine love. In other words, it is a matter of meditating on the mystery of the Luminous Trinity, whose symbol is the "seal of Solomon":- or again, on the symbol of the Trinity alongside that of the Luminous Trinity: △

This symbol of the development of the Holy Trinity into the Luminous Trinity, i.e. the triangle which turns into the hexagram, is at the same time the divine meaning — or the highest that I know — of the number nine. Ten further spiritual exercises were necessary for us, after the meditation on the ninth Arcanum of the Tarot, in order to dare to touch on the theme of the development of the Holy Trinity into the Luminous Holy Trinity.

-- We have indicated above that it is the practice of prayer and the liturgical life of the Church where the great truths anticipate their promulgation as dogmas. Now, the mystery of the number nine, that of the development of the Trinity into the Luminous Trinity, also lives in the practice of prayer and ritual within the Church.

I have in mind the practice, universally diffused in the Catholic Church, of the n o v e n a — the most practiced form of which is the act of prayer consisting of one Pater Noster and three Ave Marias, to which one devotes oneself for nine days. One makes a novena by appealing to the paternal love of the Father (Pater Noster) and to the maternal love of the

Mother (the three Ave Marias) simultaneously for nine days, for the sake of a person or a cause. What depth there is underlying this practice that is so simple! In truth – in any case for the Hermeticist — the direction of the superhuman wisdom of the Holy Spirit is manifested here!

Similarly, it is so with the rosary prayer, where appeal to the two aspects of divine parental love in the prayer addressed to the Father and the Mother is made during meditation on the mysteries of the Joy, Suffering and Glory of the Blessed Virgin. The Rosary prayer is – in any case for the Hermeticist — again a masterpiece of simplicity, containing and revealing things of inexhaustible profundity — a masterpiece of the Holy Spirit!

Dear Unknown Friend, the Arcanum " T h e S u n " with which we are occupied is an arcanum of children bathing in the light of the sun. Here it is not a matter of finding occult things, but rather of seeing ordinary and simple things in the light of day of the Sun and with the look of a child.

The XIXth Arcanum of the Tarot, the Arcanum of i n t u i t i o n, is that of revelatory N a i v e t y in the act of knowledge, which renders the spirit capable of an intensity of look not troubled by doubt and by the scruples engendered by doubt, i.e. it is the vision of things such as they are under the eternally new day of the Sun. It teaches the art of undergoing the pure and simple impression which reveals through itself — without intellectual hypotheses and superstructures — what things are. To render impressions noumenous — this is what it is a matter of in the Arcanum " The Sun", the Arcanum of intuition.

You will understand therefore, dear Unknown Friend, that in speaking of parental love and of its two aspects, in speaking of the practice of the novena and the rosary prayer, etc., we are in no way estranging ourselves from the theme of the XIXth Arcanum of the Tarot; rather, on the contrary, we are penetrating to its very heart. For we are endeavoring to advance from an understanding of what intuition is to its exercise, from meditation on the Arcanum of intuition — to the use of this Arcanum.

(E n d of the XIXth L e t t e r)

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Meditation on the XXth Major Arcanum of the Tarot:
"THE JUDGEMENT" --
"LE JUGEMENT"

"The state of the brain continues the remembrance; it gives it a hold on the present by the materiality which it confers upon it: but pure memory is a spiritual manifestation. With memory we are in very truth in the domain of spirit."
(Henri BERGSON, "Matter and Memory"; trsl. N.M. Paul and W.S.Palmer, London, 1911, p. 320)

"For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to the Son..."
(Gosp. of St. John v, 21-23)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The Card that we have before us bears the traditional name "The Judgement", and what it represents is the resurrection of the dead at the sound of the trumpet of the Angel of Resurrection. It is a matter, therefore, of a spiritual exercise where the use of intuition — that of Arcanum XIX "The Sun" — has to be carried to a maximum, the theme of resurrection being of the order of "last things", but all the same accessible to intuitive cognition.

Now, the "last things" — or the spiritual horizon of humanity — are not the same for the whole of humanity. For some everything finishes with the death of the individual and with the complete dissipation — maximum entropy — of the warmth of the universe; for others there is a "beyond", an individual existence after death and an existence of a non-material universe after the end of the world; for still others there is not only spiritual life after death for the individual but also his return to terrestrial life — reincarnation — as well as cosmic reincarnation, i.e. an alternation of states of manvantara and pralaya; others, again, see — for the individual — something beyond repeated incarnations, namely the state of supreme peace of union with the eternal and universal Being — the state of nirvana; lastly, there is a part of mankind whose existential horizon goes beyond not only post mortem existence and reincarnation, but also even beyond the peace of union with God. It is <u>resurrection</u> which constitutes their spiritual horizon.

It is in the Judeo-Christian and Iranian spiritual currents — i.e. in Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism — that the idea and ideal of resurrection has taken root. The advent of the idea and ideal of resurrection was "as lightning coming from the east and shining as far as the west" (Matthew xxiv, 27). The inspired prophet of the East, namely the great Zarathustra in Iran, and the inspired prophets of the West — Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel in Israel — announced it almost simultaneously.

"Then he (Saoshyant) shall restore the world, which will (thenceforth) never grow old and never die, never decay and never perish, ever live and ever increase, and be

master over its wish, when the dead will rise, when life and immortality will come, and the world will be restored at (God's) wish" — such is the idea of R i s t a k h e z, i.e. of Resurrection, in the ZAMYAD YASHT (trsl. R.P. MASANI, "The Religion of the Good Life. Zoroastrianism", London, 1938, p.113), whilst Isaiah says of it:

"Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise.
O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!
For thy dew is a dew of light,
and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall." (Isaiah xxvi, 19)

What is the idea and ideal of resurrection?

The following parable can be useful to us for understanding the meaning of the idea and ideal of resurrection:

Some people are near the bed of a sick person and give their opinions on his state and his prospects.

One of them says: He is not ill. It is his nature which is manifesting in this fashion. His state is only natural.

Another says: His illness is temporary. It will be followed naturally by the re-establishment of his health. Cycles of sickness and health follow one after the other. This is the law of destiny.

A third says: The illness is incurable. He is suffering in vain. It would be better to put an end to his suffering and to give him, through pity, death.

Then the last one begins to speak: His illness is fatal. He will not recover at all without help from outside. It will be necessary to renew his blood, for his blood is infected. I shall let his blood and then give him a transfusion of blood. I shall give my blood for the transfusion.

And the end of the story is that after treating him accordingly, the ill person — being healed — gets up.

These are the four principal attitudes towards the world. The pagan attitude is that of accepting the world as it is. The "pagan", i.e. he who believes that the world is perfect and for whom the world is the god Cosmos, denies the fact that the world is sick. There was no Fall of Nature. Nature is health and perfection itself.

The attitude of "spiritual naturism", i.e. that of minds whose horizon is enlarged beyond the present state of the world to recognition of the semi-cyclical evolution — the "seasons" of the great Cosmic Year — of the world, is that of believing that degeneration and regeneration follow one another cyclically in the world, that "falls" and "reintegrations" of the world alternate as do the seasons of the year. For "spiritual naturism" the present world is certainly "sick", i.e. degenerate, but it will re-establish itself, i.e. it will regenerate, necessarily and naturally, according to the law of cyclicity. One has only to wait for it.

The attitude of "spiritual humanism" is that of people who raise themselves above the pure and simple cyclicity of "spiritual naturism" and who protest, in the name of the individual being, against the interminable chain of cyclicity (be it "seasons" of the world or individual reincarnations) — seeing here interminable subjugation and suffering for the human being. This attitude is one of <u>negation</u> both as a whole and in detail of past, present and future

Nature — whether spiritual or material, cyclical or unique. Life is suffering; therefore it would be cruel and inhuman to affirm it. Human salvation, dictated by pity, is to cut for ever all links of the human spirit with the world and its cyclicity.

The naive cosmolatry of paganism is the point of view of the first person in our parable — the one who says: He is not ill. The "spiritual naturism" of enlightened paganism is the point of view of the second person — the one who says that illness is only a cyclic episode. The negation of the world of "spiritual humanism" is expressed by the third person who says: The illness being incurable, it is better to let the sufferer die.

Now, these three attitudes towards the world — historically manifested in pagan Hellenism, in Hindu Brahmanism, and in Buddhism — are distinguished from the fourth, i.e. that of active intervention with a view to accomplishing the work of the purification and regeneration of the world, in that they lack the <u>therapeutic impulse</u> and the <u>faith in therapy</u>, whilst the attitude which is manifested historically in the prophetic religions (Iranian, Judaic and Islamic) and in the religion of salvation (Christianity), where <u>renewal</u> of the world is the motive force and final aim, is essentially <u>therapeutic</u>. It is the fourth person of our parable — he who <u>acts</u> and heals the illness through a transfusion of his blood — who represents the <u>Christian attitude</u>, which includes and realizes those of the prophetic religions. The Christian ideal is the renewal of the world — "a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation xxi), i.e. Universal Resurrection.

The idea and ideal of Resurrection goes further than the negation of Nature, as is the case with the "spiritual humanism" of Buddhism — it signifies its complete transformation, the alchemical work on a cosmic scale of the transmutation of Nature — spiritual as well as material, "heaven" and "earth". There is no idea and ideal more bold, more contrary to empirical experience, and more shocking to common sense than that of Resurrection. Indeed the idea and ideal of Resurrection presupposes a force of soul which renders it capable not only of emancipation from the hypnotizing influence of the totality of empirical facts, i.e. of breaking away from the world; not only of deciding to take part in the evolution of the world — that is to say, no longer in the capacity of an object of the world but also, and rather, as a subject, i.e. of becoming a motivating spirit instead of a moved spirit; not only of participating actively in the process of world evolution; but also of raising oneself to conscious participation in the work of Divine Magic — the magical operation on a cosmic scale whose aim is Resurrection.

The idea, the ideal and the work of Resurrection comprises the "fifth asceticism". For there is "natural asceticism" — that of moderation and putting the brakes on desires — with <u>health</u> in view; there is the "asceticism of detachment" — that of the spirit conscious of itself and of its immortality in the face of things that are transitory and of less value — with a view to <u>freedom</u>; there is the "asceticism of attachment" — that of the love of God, where loving him is divesting oneself of all that which intervenes between oneself and the Beloved — with a view to <u>union</u>; there is the "asceticism of activity" — that of active participation in evolution, i.e. of human work and endeavor aiming at <u>perfection</u>; and lastly there is the "asceticism of Divine Magic" — that of the Great Work of <u>Resurrection</u>, which includes and crowns all the other "asceticisms", since the work of Divine Magic presupposes <u>union with the divine will</u>, the

realization and surpassing of evolution, complete freedom of the spirit, and therapeutic action towards the whole of Nature.

The idea, ideal and work of Resurrection therefore make appeal to that which is most creative, most generous and most courageous in the human soul. For the soul is invited to become a conscious and active instrument of accomplishment — neither more nor less — of a miracle on a cosmic scale. What Faith, what hope and what love the idea, ideal and work of Resurrection imply here! In the face of the idea and ideal of Resurrection, does one not remember St. Paul's words? —

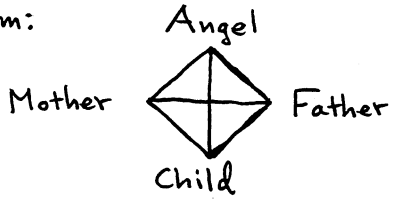
> "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debator of this world... For since the world through its wisdom did not know God in his wisdom, it pleased God to save those who believe through the folly of preaching." (I Corinthians i, 20-21)

The folly of preaching.. Does the idea, ideal and work of Resurrection necessarily fall under the heading of the folly of preaching today, i.e. nineteen centuries later? After nineteen centuries of effort and evolution of human religious, philosophical, scientific and — last but not least — hermetic thought? After St. Augustine, St. Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventura, the great mystics, the masters of alchemy, and the pleiad of idealist philosophers, scientific evolutionism — after depth physics and depth psychology, after Henri Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin and Jung?

In other words, is not human thought, after the enormous work of nineteen centuries, better equipped and more evolved — given good will — to see in the idea, ideal and work of Resurrection more than the "folly of preaching"?

An honest and profound meditation on the idea, ideal and work of Resurrection — i.e. on the XXth Arcanum of the Tarot — is the sole means of coming to an affirmative or negative answer to this question. Let us therefore apply ourselves to it!

Let us take account, first of all, of the context of the Card of this Arcanum. Both the Marseilles Tarot (1761) and the Tarot of Fautriez (1753-1793), and also that of Court de Gébelin, represent a man and a woman who contemplate the resurrection from a tomb of a third person, an adolescent. The Card represents a kind of "parallelogram of resurrecting forces" — the Angel with the Trumpet above, the parental love of the father (on the right) and the mother (on the left) and, below, the arising of the resuscitated one from an open tomb. The man and woman are outside of the tomb; it is only their child — an adolescent — who is resuscitated. Therefore we have before us the following parallelogram:



This geometrical figure, derived from the image of the Card of the XXth Arcanum, portrays the composition of the forces realizing Resurrection: the sound of the Angel's trumpet, the parental love of the father and the mother, and the effort of arising of the resuscitated adolescent. It is the same composition of operative forces that we find in the raising of Lazarus at Bethany (John xi), where Jesus plays the role of the Angel, the Father and the Mother — all at once.

> "Jesus wept. So the Jews said: See how he loved him... Jesus, deeply moved again,

came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay before it. Jesus said: Take away the stone... So they took away the stone... He cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come out! The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them: Unbind him and let him go."

Now, Jesus weeping manifests the tender love of the Mother; Jesus, deeply moved again, coming to the tomb and saying: Take away the stone — manifests the active love of the Father; and Jesus crying with a loud voice: Lazarus, come out! — sounds the trumpet in serving as the Angel of Resurrection. The loud voice crying: Lazarus, come out! is the sound of the trumpet of Resurrection, which changes the love of the Mother and the love of the Father into a magical call.

The magic of Resurrection, aspired to by the XXth Arcanum of the Tarot, is therefore that of the sound of the Voice of the love of the Mother and the love of the Father united. Just as the earthly father and mother give life to the child at his incarnation, where the Angel of Life sounds the trumpet in order to call his soul into incarnation — and the "trumpet" formed by his outspread wings is then turned above — so do the celestial Father and Mother restore the child to life at his resurrection, where the Angel of Resurrection sounds the trumpet in order to call <u>his soul and his body</u> to Resurrection — and the "trumpet" formed by his outspread wings is then turned below.

This is the general meaning of the Arcanum. It is now a matter of understanding the "details", i.e. of understanding correctly. There still remains a whole world, namely the <u>how</u> of resurrection.

Now, forgetting, sleep and death are opposed to remembering, wakefulness and birth in the earthly life of man. Forgetting, sleep and death are members of the same family. It is said that sleep is the younger brother of death; by the same token it would be right to say that forgetting is the younger brother of sleep. Forgetting, sleep and death are three degrees of a single thing, namely the process of elimination of a conscious and living being. It is noteworthy that the account of Lazarus' resurrection that we quoted above also brings the chain forgetting-sleep-death into consideration. It is said: "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was..., then he said to them (the disciples): Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him... Then Jesus told them plainly: Lazarus is dead... (Upon which) Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples: let us also go, that we may die with him." — Thomas says this, having understood that the Master had allowed forgetting (by remaining a further two days in the place where he was after having learned the news that Lazarus was ill), sleep (by saying: Lazarus has fallen asleep) and death to accomplish their work and that, if such was the will of the Master, who so loved Lazarus, would it not be better for the disciples, also, to die with Lazarus? Indeed, Thomas was not mistaken concerning the fact that the Master certainly gave full power to forgetting, sleep and death in this case. Hence the conclusion: let us go also, so as to die with Lazarus.

Let us now consider more closely the two analogous and opposed chains: that of forgetting, sleep and death, on the one hand, and that of remembering, wakefulness and birth, on the other hand, so as to acquire the conceptual equipment to be able to grapple with the mystery of Resurrection.

We know that our ego consciousness, the consciousness that we have during the sixteen hours of

the waking state each day, is only a weak part of the totality of our consciousness. It is only a cross-section of the whole, only a focal point of action, i.e. of judgement, word and deed.

Indeed, at each given moment the content of our consciousness in the waking state is limited to that which has reference to what we are engaged in judging, saying or doing, or else what we are going to judge, to say or to do. The rest, i.e. all that which is not concerned with inner or outer action, is not present in our consciousness and is "elsewhere". For action entails concentration of consciousness, i.e. selection from the totality of images and concepts belonging to our consciousness which interest us with a view to action. Thus all that you know of astronomy, chemistry, history and jurisprudence is absent and relegated to the darkness of temporary forgetfulness when you discuss your garden with your gardener. In order to act, it is necessary to forget.

In return, action requires that one draws from the same darkness of temporary forgetfulness all the memory images and concepts of knowledge which could be useful. In order to act, one has to recall.

To forget is therefore to dismiss the things which do not interest us to the darkness of latent memory; and to recall things is to call anew to active ego consciousness — because they interest us — from the same darkness of latent memory. It goes without saying that it is not the images and concepts which come to birth when we recall them, or perish when we forget them; rather, they are present in our mind or are removed from it. To be endowed with "good concentration" therefore amounts to the faculty of chasing away swiftly and completely all images and concepts which are not useful for action. It is the mastery of the art of forgetting.

To be endowed with "good memory", in contrast, signifies mastery of the mechanism of recall — of that which renders present the images and concepts one needs. It is the mastery of the art of recalling.

There is therefore a continual coming and going between ordinary consciousness of the waking state (or cerebral consciousness) and the domain of memory. Each "going" corresponds to the action of falling asleep or dying. Each "coming" corresponds to awakening or resurrection. Every representation that goes from the field of cerebral consciousness experiences an analogous fate to that stated by the saying: "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep . . . Lazarus is dead." And every representation that one recalls has a fate analogous to that which took place when Jesus cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come out!"

Memory therefore supplies us with a key of analogy which allows intelligence not to remain simply taken aback in the face of the problem of resurrection. It renders it intelligible.

Indeed, the analogy between the "loud voice" which called Lazarus to life and the inner effort which evokes a memory reveals, mutatis mutandis, the essence of the magic of Jesus' "loud voice" and of the "sound of the trumpet" of the Angel of the Resurrection — as the following shows.

Experience teaches us that we easily forget, and recall with difficulty, the things to which we attach no value — that we do not love. One forgets what one does not love and one never forgets what one loves. It is love which gives us the power to recall at any desired moment the things that our hearts preserve "warm". Indifference, in contrast, makes one forget everything.

It is the same with the "awaking and resurrection of the dead". Here it is not cosmic indifference (that we call "matter") which will effect anything, but rather it is cosmic love (that we call "Spirit") which will accomplish the magical act of resurrection, i.e. the

reintegration of an inseparable unity — the unity of spirit, soul and body — not by way of birth (reincarnation) but by way of the magical act of Divine Memory. What can one say about Divine Memory? --

The ideas of Henri Bergson and the clinical experience of modern neuro-pathology together establish as certain fact that in reality nothing is forgotten from the totality of man's psychic life, and that so-called "forgotten" things are in the unconscious (i.e. extra-cerebral) part of the psychic life. There is complete memory in the depths of the unconscious, where nothing is forgotten.

Just as the microcosm, the human being, forgets nothing, so does the macrocosm, the world, not forget anything. What occult literature calls the "A k a s h a chronicle" is to history which is in the process of unfolding as the total memory of the psychic unconscious is to the conscious self's memory in action. The "Akasha chronicle" is the macrocosmic analogy to the total memory of the microcosmic unconscious (or, rather, the extra-conscious). And just as total psychic memory is not inactive, often affecting psychic health, so does the "Akasha chronicle" often play a decisive role in the unfolding of universal history.

The two analogous terms — the "total psychic memory" of the individual and the "memory of the cosmos" ("cosmic memory") or the "Akasha chronicle" — are too general. It is still necessary to distinguish and specify — which both depth psychology and occult literature have hardly done. Indeed, the former as well as the latter treat "total psychic memory" and the "Akasha chronicle" <u>en bloc</u>, as if it were a matter of uniform and homogeneous unities without inner differences and contrasts. However, both "total psychic memory" and the "Akasha chronicle" show, in fact, differences — and even contrasts — each with respect to its own domain. With respect to "total psychic memory", one has to distinguish between the pure and simple <u>tableau</u> of the entire past, the <u>structure</u> of the past or its "logical tableau" and, lastly, the travelled <u>way</u> of the past or its "moral tableau". These three "tableaus" of psychic memory correspond to the three types of memory such as we know them in our conscious life — automatic memory, logical memory and moral memory. "Automatic memory" is the psycho-physical faculty of reproducing (semi-automatically thanks to the functioning of the mechanism of associations) in the imagination all the <u>facts</u> of the past that are relevant or not. It places the pure and simple <u>tableau</u> of the past as raw material at the disposal of the conscious self so that the latter makes use of it and extracts from it the elements that it needs. The tableau of the past presented by purely associative or "automatic memory" is indifferent in so far as logic and morality is concerned; it is only a complex of facts from the past unfolded before the inner eye like a cinematographic film in sound and color. And it is up to the spectator, i.e. the conscious self, to extract salient and pertinent facts from it.

Automatic memory is the "trump card" of childhood and youth. It is thanks to it that children and young people are able to learn the enormous quantity of things — with prodigious facility and rapidity that belongs to their age — that they need or could need in this world. However, it is no longer so with a person who has reached a mature age. Automatic memory is weakened in proportion to the extent with which age increases. A person between the two extremes of age will find that he can no longer reckon with his automatic memory to the same extent that he could ten or fifteen years previously — that a certain effort is necessary to make up for and fill in its ever more frequent lapses. It is then <u>logical</u> effort which comes to aid the semi-automatic functioning of the failing mechanism of associations. It is the logical sequence of cause and effect which then

replaces little by little the automatic play of associations. One is led more and more to replace the semi-photographic tableau of memory of the past by the tableau of facts relating to the logical relationships between them.

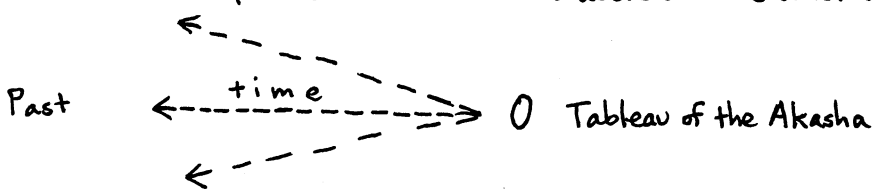
"Logical memory", where the evocating force of the past is intelligence instead of the irrational automatism of the play of associations, weaves a tableau of the past according to the lines of sequential reasoning that intelligence finds relevant. One does not recall things simply because they took place, but rather because they played a role whose effects reach the present.

Just as "automatic memory" with time gives up its supremacy in the domain of evoking the past to "logical memory", so does the latter yield its dominant role to "moral memory".

"Moral memory" presents a tableau of the past where the context indicates facts and sequences of facts not in so far as they took place or in so far as they played a relevant logical role, but above all in so far as they reveal moral value and meaning. In old age "moral memory" more and more replaces "logical memory", and the force of memory then depends on moral force — on the intensity of the moral and spiritual life of the person in question. And as there is nothing in the world which is so insignificant that it is beneath moral and spiritual values — and as there is nothing so lofty that it is above them — the "moral memory" in old age of a person with an awakened heart can, in principle, replace without fault all the functions of "automatic memory" and "logical memory".

Now, a threefold macrocosmic memory, the threefold "Akasha Chronicle", corresponds to the threefold microcosmic memory — to "automatic memory", "logical memory" and "moral memory". There are, in fact, three "Akasha Chronicles". Occult literature, however, makes a case for only one, which is customarily spoken of as a kind of cinematographic film of the world's past, unfolding — before the seer's eye — things and events of the past such as they were, with all their details and with semi-photographic exactness.

This chronicle — which, moreover, certainly exists — displays the remarkable characteristic that the more remote the past, the more two contrary tendencies are manifested: namely that of ascent towards higher spheres and, simultaneously, that of descent towards lower spheres. One could say that it is divided into two parts, where one rises above and the other descends below:-



There is, therefore, a twofold process taking place in the "Akasha Chronicle": it is spiritualized and at the same time concretized, in proportion to the extent that the distance from the present into the past increases. One could compare this process with what happens to the trees in autumn: the leaves are separated from the tree; they fall onto the ground and the tree itself — reduced to the essential of its form — stands out in more austere and precise lines against the background of the sky.

In fact, it is a matter of a process comparable to that of abstraction. Just as in the process of abstraction all that which is not essential is set apart and that which is essential is retained, so a similar process takes place in the "Akasha Chronicle". A selection of the essential is retained, i.e. another, spiritualized "Akasha Chronicle" is separated off, whilst the "waste" which remains —

like dead leaves — constitutes another "Akasha Chronicle": the lower chronicle. This latter descends from sphere to sphere and ends in the subterranean sphere.

The "Akasha Chronicle" which is present at first as one and undivided therefore divides into <u>two</u> distinct "chronicles" that must be sought for in different spheres. These two "chronicles" are distinguished above all by the difference in their general character. One is essentially <u>qualitative</u>, whilst the other has a <u>quantitative</u> character. This means to say that the "higher chronicle" consists solely of symbolic facts — typological facts representative of a whole series of facts — leaving their number out of account, and the "lower chronicle" consists precisely of the series of facts rejected as useless by the "higher chronicle" — rejected because they are already found to be qualitatively represented by a symbolic or typological fact.

Therefore, just as "logical memory" disengages itself from "automatic memory" and replaces it at a mature age in the life of the human individual, so does the "Akasha Chronicle" disengage the "higher chronicle" — analogous to "logical memory" in the individual's life — to replace that which becomes the "lower chronicle", which latter descends into the subterranean sphere.

The "higher chronicle" is the intelligent memory of the history of the world. It is the "Book of Truth" that one can not only read, i.e. see, but also "swallow", i.e. assimilate in such a way that it becomes always present in us — and which "will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth" (Revelation x, 9). The other book, the "Book of Archives" or the "Book of Facts", is no part of initiation, i.e. it cannot be "swallowed"; one can draw items of information from it only by procedures such as psychometry, mediumistic clairvoyance, or also by the intermediation of beings who have access to the subterranean region where it is to be found.

There is yet another "Book" — the "B o o k of L i f e" — of which the Apocalypse speaks (xx, 12), where it is said: "Books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done."

The "Book of Life" is the <u>third</u> "Akasha Chronicle" which corresponds to "moral memory" in individual human life. It contains only what is of eternal value, i.e. that which is worthy of living eternally — <u>that which is worthy of Resurrection</u>.

The third "Akasha Chronicle" or the "Book of Life" contains the past only in so far as it is of significance for the future (and the future only in so far as it is of significance for eternity).

But do not think, dear Unknown Friend, that the third "Akasha Chronicle" or the "Book of Life", consists only of "great things", that it does not have the things of "ordinary" or so-called "daily" life. It does so because — I repeat — there is nothing in the world which is so insignificant as to be beneath moral (i.e. eternal) value and there is nothing so lofty as to be above moral value. Indeed, this "Chronicle" contains many a thing judged as "small" — but which is great in the moral context of life. One finds there, for example, complete texts of manuscripts written by authors — who, as editors, entrusted them to the four winds, addressing them to anyone into whose hands they would perhaps at some time fall. One also hears there the prayer borne by the last breath of a dying atheist or agnostic — the prayer which no one heard and no one expected. One sees there the radiation of the small coins put

by "poor widows" in the "temple coffers" — and many things judged as small by the world.

The "Book of Life" is therefore the moral memory of the world. Therefore it does not contain forgiven and atoned-for sins. All forgiving and atonement entails change in the "Book of Life" or the "third Akasha Chronicle". For this reason it is constantly modified — written and re-written from day to day. For just as within the individual's moral memory the accounts to be adjusted are cancelled for those whom one has pardoned — consciously forgetting them — so forgiven and atoned-for sins are effaced from the "Book of Life". Divine memory forgets forgiven and atoned-for sins.

And it is the "third Akasha Chronicle", or the "Book of Life", which is the essence of Karma. Since the Incarnation of Christ, Karma has become the affair of the Lord of Karma who is Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christ not only preached the New Law which must replace the Old Law of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" but also realized it on the cosmic level by elevating the "Book of Life" above the "book of accounts" of strict justice. Karma is therefore no more the law of cause and effect solely, which works from incarnation to incarnation — it is now, above all, the means of salvation, i.e. the means of effecting new inscriptions in the "Book of Life" and of effacing other inscriptions from it. The cosmic sense of the sacrament of Baptism is the act of the passage of the soul from ancient Karma, i.e. from the "law of the regulation of accounts", to new Karma — to the law of pardon of the "Book of Life". And it is this truth that one confesses by saying the words of the Creed: Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum (I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins). For the remission of sins signifies their effacement from the "third Akasha Chronicle", the "Book of Life".

The three "Akasha Chronicles" are to be found in different spheres:

moral chronicle

logical chronicle

chronicle of facts

It is above all the first chronicle, that of facts, from which entities of the hierarchies of the left, i.e. those of strict justice, draw evidence for their accusations. It constitutes the archives of the cosmic prosecution.

With respect to the second chronicle, the logical chronicle, it is virtually the totality of accounts rendered in the millennial-old debate between the cosmic advocacy and the cosmic prosecution, i.e. between the hierarchies of the right and those of the left, or between Good and Evil. The second "Akasha Chronicle" indicates for each given moment the equilibrium that there is in the world between Good and Evil.

The third "Akasha Chronicle" is the source of strength for hierarchies of the right; it contains the supporting reasons for their faith in justice for the sake of world evolution and humanity, as well as for ultimate universal salvation. The third chronicle aspires to Resurrection — to the reintegration of beings — whilst the second is the history of equilibrium, i.e. the Karma of the world, the equilibrium between Good and Evil. The first chronicle — that of facts, pure and simple — supplies the points of support for the arguments of the hierarchies of the left, who do not believe in mankind and accuse mankind at all reproachable points.

LEIBNITZ, the German philosopher, is the author of the statement considered as the

classical formula of the most radical philosophical optimism: "This world is the best of all conceivable worlds". This radical optimism from a man who, in that which concerned his personal life, was more unhappy than is usual, remains incomprehensible if his nocturnal experience of the "third Akasha Chronicle" is not taken into consideration. Notably, the fact must be pointed out that certain individuals (their number is not important) are sometimes admitted to readership of the "Book of Life", i.e. by the grace of the Guardian of this Book, the "third Akasha Chronicle" is shown to to them in the state of sleep. They must forget this experience in their day consciousness, since the latter could not support such an increase of knowledge, but what remains to them is its psychic summary in the guise of the force of optimistic faith — such as Leibnitz had, for example. His optimistic faith was the residue in day consciousness of the forgotten nocturnal knowledge.

Similarly, it can happen that someone can have the nocturnal experience of reading from the "second Akasha Chronicle", and as a result of this experience the unshakeable conviction is formulated — as, for example, by Friedrich SCHILLER: "The history of the world is the judgement of the world" (Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht), i.e. that the history of the world is perpetual judgement or KARMA.

One should know that there are not only diverse "Akasha Chronicles" but also <u>diverse ways</u> of experiencing or "reading" them. One can "see" the Chronicle, one can "hear" it and one can be "seated" or "immersed" in it. This means to say that parts of the "Akasha Chronicle" can be seen in vision, or can be heard as a dramatic or musical work, or also can become an integral or structural part of the spirit and soul of the one who experiences it. The latter identifies himself with it and it lives and works in him. It is this to which the Apocalypse of St. John aspires when there it is said (Rev. x, 9) that a book was <u>swallowed</u> which "will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth". For it is characteristic that the <u>intuitive</u> experience of the "second Akasha Chronicle" comprises a state of psychic depression due to the gravity of its contents, but that this depression is transformed into joy as soon as the intuitive experience is grasped and understood by intelligence, i.e. when it becomes "articulated word". Then it becomes "sweet as honey in the mouth".

It should be added that whatever the way of "reading the Akasha Chronicle" is, it is always a matter of parts or extracts from it, for no human spirit — even disincarnated — could bear the <u>whole</u>. One would have to be of the Spiritual status of the Archangel Michael to be able to bear the whole of the "second Akasha Chronicle" and of the status of the Guardian Cherubim at the Entrance to Paradise to be able to bear the whole of the "third Akasha Chronicle".

Therefore, the experiences of the "Akasha Chronicle" undergone by occultists, esotericists, mystics and Hermeticists are always partial. As a general rule, the extent to which it is bearable is greater in the case of intuitive experience; it diminishes for inspirative experience; and it is more limited still for visionary experience. Thus, for example, Fabre d'OLIVET founded his work "Histoire philosophique du genre humain" ("Philosophical History of the Human Race") on a number of visions or scenes from the "second Akasha Chronicle". It was a matter of extracts — of some pages from a great book — and it was his intellectual speculation which established some connecting links between the isolated scenes of his visions, and which filled the gaps between what he had seen and what he had not seen. This is why, quite rightly, he entitled his work "<u>Philosophical</u> History of the Human Race" — for the greater part of his work is due to his philosophy, i.e. to intellectual interpretation and speculation. It would

therefore be a grave error to consider Fabre d'Olivet's book as revelation or purely and simply an account of what he had read in the "Akasha Chronicle". There is to be found there not only things where the author's predilection plays a role but also quite marked prejudices (for example, that against Christianity). However, this does not bear any prejudice against his merit of having been an "angel of the tradition" at the beginning of the nineteenth century and of having awoken — perhaps saved — some important aspects of the Hermetic Tradition. For it was he who was the first to raise History to the niveau of Hermeticism — which, before Fabre d'Olivet, was strikingly lacking a vision of the history of the world. Before Fabre d'Olivet the mystical aspect — the great alchemical work, the inner work of the new man and that of sacred magic — for a long time played the principal role in Hermeticism. It is thanks to him that a current of esoteric history was set in motion, which was represented by Saint-YVES d'Alveydre, H.P. Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner — to name only the most well-known names. But since the time of Fabre d'Olivet esoteric historicism has undergone an unparalleled development: grandiose works have seen the light of day — for example, "Cosmic Memory" and the chapters on cosmic history in "An Outline of Occult Science" by Dr. Rudolf Steiner ("Aus der Akasha-Chronik"; "Geheimwissenschaft in Umriss"). What we have said above concerning the work of Fabre d'Olivet is equally applicable to his successors in the domain of esoteric historicism based on the Akasha Chronicle. For whatever the extent of their experience of the Akasha Chronicle may be, however imposing the results of their efforts to do justice to this experience may be, it remains nonetheless fragmentary — and it is to the intellectual effort of the authors, more or less crowned with success, that we owe the logical or artistic sequence of their pretended account from the "Akasha Chronicle". Each of these authors of esoteric history has gaps in his experience of its source — the "Akasha Chronicle" — and has filled them by taking recourse to his own means, to his intelligence and erudition.

Thus, the situation of esoteric historicism is at present such that one cannot swear by any particular work; here, also, collective work is necessary from generation to generation — i.e. a living tradition, where each continues the work of his predecessors, by confirming the truth, filling in the gaps, and correcting errors of interpretation or vision. Today no one should begin any more "wholly anew" from his own initiative in the domain of esoteric history, even if he is the most profound seer and greatest thinker. Henceforth it will be a matter not of isolated flashes of genius, but rather of a continuous collective endeavor of the tradition — which means to say of a slow but continuous growth of the light whose dawn was Fabre d'Olivet's work.

Dear Unknown Friend — you who are reading these lines written by a Hermeticist in 1965, after nearly 50 years of endeavor and experience in the domain of Hermeticism — I beg you not to regard what is written here as a vow made for the future of the current of Hermetic historicism, but rather as a testament making you who read these lines a trustee of the task in question — without reserve, but, however, with your consent. If you consent, do all that you judge to be proper, but one thing I implore you not to do: to found an organization, an association, a society or an order which is charged with the task in question. For the Tradition lives not thanks to organizations, but rather in spite of them. One should content oneself with friendship, pure and simple, in order to preserve the life of a tradition; it is not necessary to entrust it to the care of the

embalmers and mummifiers par excellence that organizations are, save for that founded by Jesus Christ.

Let us return to the "Akasha Chronicle". It can reveal itself, as you see, in the human soul — either contracted to the point of an arrow as with the aforementioned statements by Leibnitz and Schiller: "This world is the best of all conceivable worlds" and "the history of the world is the judgement of the world" — or by way of a series of tableaus or dramatic pieces which give rise to volumes of works on the esoteric history of the world and humanity. Whatever its mode of revelation — extremely abridged or in almost unlimited deployment — its <u>effect</u> is always the same: cosmic optimism (the faith of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin!) and an increased sense of historical responsibility (the preoccupation of Carl Gustav JUNG). In other words, in this respect your <u>soul</u> has the same gain, no matter whether you have the vision of long extracts from the Chronicle in your day consciousness or whether you have only the psychic summary of it — the residue of the experience of the Chronicle undergone in night consciousness, during sleep. The experience of the "third Chronicle" (the "Book of Life") always has the effect that belief in God and in ultimate universal salvation — including the Devil (the faith of Origen!) becomes unshakeable, and all experience of the "second Chronicle" (that of the Karma of the world) always has the effect that it awakens and intensifies the sense of the individual's responsibility for the universal lot (the meaning underlying the belief in "ten righteous men who justify the world"!).

With respect to the "first Chronicle" ("the film which reproduces the past in all its details"), experience of it is comparable to that of organized espionage — it supplies a quantity of items of information — useful and useless, in a jumble — from which the meaning and logical sequence must be extracted through a work which is essentially the same as that done by a well-trained journalist or historian, as an eye-witness of recent events. This "Chronicle" hardly teaches; it only informs. And it informs in such a way that it supplies a mass of facts simultaneously — without any selection and perhaps without relationship to the problem which interests you. The effect of experience of the "first Chronicle" on the human soul is that the latter feels itself lost before an excessive number of unknown and even incomprehensible facts. It <u>tires</u> and fills to repletion even the most curious of minds.

Thus here you have the essence of the "Akasha Chronicle". And the essential thing concerning this essence is its <u>magic</u>, i.e. the vivifying and awakening effect that it produces when it becomes summarized — summarized. For the "Chronicle", vast and grand as it is, can be concentrated to a single word, to a single magical sound. And this magical concentration of the "Akasha Chronicle", the Memory of the World, is precisely the <u>Trumpet</u> of the Angel who figures in the "parallelogram of resurrecting forces" that the card of the XXth Arcanum of the Tarot represents.

The trumpet of the Angel is the entire "Akasha Chronicle" concentrated in a single word or sound — awakening, vivifying and resuscitating. The symbol of the trumpet is related in general to the magical concentration of mystical and gnostic contents. It always signifies the transformation of a world of mystical experience and gnostic knowledge into magical action. The "trumpet" — in Hermetic symbolism — is Mysticism and Gnosis which have become Magic.

The "parallelogram of forces" operating the resurrection represented by the XXth Major Arcanum of the Tarot therefore consists of the following forces: the parental love of the Father

and Mother, the sound of the Trumpet from above, i.e. the magical summary of the "Akasha Chronicle", and the effort to arise of the one being resurrected. Until now we have been occupied with three of the forces of the parallelogram of the Arcanum — the love of the Father, the love of the Mother and the "Sound of the Trumpet". It remains, therefore, to try to penetrate the fourth force meditatively — that of the active reaction to the action of the three forces which have been the object of our meditation until now.

Thus, it is a matter of considering such problems as the role of human effort (the theological problem of "work" and grace), the significance of resurrection — if it is complete, i.e. embraces spirit, soul and body, or if it is only spiritual — and, lastly, the nature of the "resurrection body".

It stands to reason that man cannot resurrect himself. All the religious doctrines on Resurrection (Zoroastrian, Judaic, Christian and Islamic), as well as the XXth Arcanum on the Tarot, are in agreement on this point. Man does not resurrect himself; he will be resurrected. Resurrection whether we like it or not? Come what may?

In other words, is Resurrection something which purely and simply comes to man, without any participation on his part, or is it a comprehensive act which embraces the entire circle of that which is above and that which is below — including human will?

Let us return once again to Lazarus' resurrection at Bethany. There, Jesus, after being "deeply moved in spirit", after having wept and been "deeply moved again", and after having "given thanks to the Father that he has been heard", "cried in a loud voice: Lazarus, come out!" And the dead man came out, says the Gospel, his hands and feet wrapped in bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Did Lazarus come out of the tomb like a somnambulist obeying the order of a hypnotist, i.e. under magical constraint? Or did he come out because the voice that he heard had awoken in him all the love, all the hope and all the faith which vibrated in it, and thus he experienced the ardent desire to be near the one who called him?

Eliphas LÉVI in the third book of his work "The Key of the Mysteries" gives a positive answer to this question. He says:

> "The sacred books indicate to us the procedure which must be employed in such a case (to recall the soul of the deceased person to his body). The prophet Elijah and the apostle St. Paul employed it with success. The deceased must be magnetized by placing the feet on his feet, the hands on his hands, the mouth on his mouth. Then concentrate the whole will for a long time, call to itself the escaped soul, using all the loving thoughts and mental caresses of which one is capable. If the operator inspires in that soul much affection or a great respect, if in the thought which he communicates magnetically to it the thaumaturgist can persuade it that life is still necessary to it, and that happy days are still in store for it below, it will certainly return, and for the man of everyday science the apparent death will have been only a lethargy." (Eliphas Lévi, "The Key of the Mysteries"; trsl. A. Crowley, London, 1969, p. 199)

Now, following Eliphas LÉVI, it was the affection and respect that the Master inspired in the soul of Lazarus, just as it was the persuasion that life was still necessary for him and that precious experiences were still promised to him here below, which made Lazarus come out of the tomb. Indeed, no one who has had a little authentic experience of the spirituality of the world could doubt that there was not a shadow of constraint in the miracle of Lazarus' resurrection — and, consequently, that there will not be any shadow of constraint in the universal miracle of the

Resurrection of the Dead.

The reaction of resuscitation at the "sound of the Trumpet" and the parental love of the Father and Mother thus constitutes an essential factor in Resurrection. The act of arising by the resuscitated adolescent — represented in the Card of the twentieth Arcanum of the Tarot — is therefore not a semi-mechanical result of the operation effected from above, but rather a free and conscious "yes" from the heart, intelligence and will of the resuscitated one. Just as Lazarus came out of the tomb moved by love, hope and faith, so does the adolescent of our Arcanum — i.e. the spiritual exercise having Resurrection as its subject — raise himself, being moved not by the sound of the Angel's trumpet and by the force of appeal of his father and mother, but rather by his own reaction to this appeal and this sound — by his love, hope and Faith in response to the appeal.

The Arcanum of Resurrection is therefore one of morality, pure and simple, wholly contrary to a pure and simple act of power. It is not a matter of a feat of force — no matter whether divine, angelic or human — but rather of the superiority of the moral order to the natural order, including death. Resurrection is not an all-powerful divine act, but rather the effect of the meeting and union of divine love, hope and faith with human love, hope and faith. There, the trumpet sounds from above the whole of divine love, hope and Faith — and not only the human spirit and soul but also all the atoms of the human body respond "Yes" in chorus, which is the free expression — a cry from the heart of the whole being and of each particular atom — of the love, hope and faith of man, and of Nature, which is represented by man. For man represents Nature towards God and he represents God towards Nature. For this reason, in addressing ourselves to the Father who is in heaven, we say: Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

What would be the good of praying to the all-powerful Father for his kingdom to come and for his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven if we were not the connecting link between him and Nature? If the Father still reigned in Nature, and if all that took place on earth were his will only? If he had not yielded his rule over Nature to others, and if other wills than his were not developing on the earth?

The earth — i.e. Nature — has been given by the Father to the free human being as the field of deployment of his freedom. And it is this freedom alone which can — and is in the right to — address this prayer to the Father in the name of freedom and in the name of the whole of Nature: thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

This prayer means to say: I desire your kingdom more than mine, for it is my ideal; and your will is the heart of hearts of my will — which languishes after your will, which is the way that my will seeks, the truth to which my will aspires, and the life from which my will lives. This prayer is therefore not only an act of submission of the human will to divine will, but it is above all the expression of hunger and thirst for union with the divine will, it does not adhere to fatalism, but rather to love. It is to St. Augustine that we owe the remarkable statement: "God is more me than I myself am"; he knew how to pray the Lord's prayer. ((It was also he who said that, without our participation, God was able to create us, but not save us.)) — For there is prayer and prayer. One learns to pray the Lord's prayer, little by little, by becoming more and more conscious of what it is essentially concerned with. For this reason, the Lord's prayer that one prays in the Mass of the Catholic Church — after the Preparation, the reading from the Epistles and the Gospels, the oblation of sacrifice and consecration, and at the beginning of the participation in the sacrifice (Communion) — is preceded by the following words: Praeceptis

salutaribus moniti, et divina institutione formati, audemus dicere: Pater noster... (Literally, "Illumined by the precepts of Salvation and instructed by divine teaching, we dare to say: Our Father..." but in practice, "Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us: Our Father..."). This means to say that the Lord's prayer requires preliminary elucidation and instruction. For to truly pronounce the petitions of the Lord's prayer, one has to have understood that our will is truly free only in union with that of God, and that God acts on the earth only through our free will freely united with his. Miracles are not proofs of divine omnipotence, but rather of the omnipotence of the alliance of divine will and human will. For this reason, anyone who preaches the pure and simple omnipotence of God sows atheism for the future. For he makes God responsible for the wars, concentration camps, and physical and psychic epidemics from which mankind has suffered and will suffer again. And sooner or later one arrives at the conclusion that God does not exist, because his omnipotence does not manifest where it should without doubt be manifested. The contemporary Marxist-communist movement has, truth to tell, no other argument for the non-existence of God than the lack of direct intervention by the all-powerful divinity. This argument amounts to that of the rulers and soldiers against the divinity of Christ, when they said to the face of the Crucified One: "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ, the chosen one of God!" – "The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him vinegar, and saying: If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!"... "One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying: Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" (Luke xxiii, 35-40)
But the other criminal crucified with him understood it was not omnipotence which was at stake, but rather love — and he said:

"We (are) indeed justly (under the same sentence of condemnation); for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong. And he said: Remember me when you come into your kingdom." (Luke xxiii, 41-43)

"Your kingdom" he said, i.e. the kingdom of l o v e and not that of omnipotence, pure and simple. – Thus, it is very dangerous to preach the omnipotence of God — and then to leave his sheep to extricate themselves from the inner conflicts that experience will sooner or later lead to. The petition of the Lord's prayer: "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," when well understood, guards us from making divine omnipotence a stake of faith. It teaches us that divine will is not done on earth as it is in heaven, and that it is necessary for the human will to pray for it, i.e. to unite with it, in order that it may be done.

It is similarly so for the Resurrection. It is not a unilateral act of divine omnipotence, but rather an act resulting from the union of two wills — namely, divine will and human will. Therefore it is not a semi-mechanical event according to the scheme: active will - instrument, but rather a moral event, i.e. the effect of the free union of two wills.

The effect of the free union of two free wills... What effect?

Resurrection is the synthesis of life and death, or — using the accepted terminology of contemporary Hermeticism — the "neutralization of the binary life-death". This means to say that after the resurrection the resuscitated one can act as if he were living and, at the

same time, he is free from terrestrial links as if he were dead. On the one hand, the risen Christ appeared in the midst of his disciples and disappeared again; on the other hand, he ate with them (cf. John xx, 19-23; 26-29; xxi 9-13; Luke xxiv 28-32; 36-43). He materialized and dematerialized himself at will. He entered through closed doors — and he ate "broiled fish and a honeycomb" (Luke xxiv, 42-43; see also "The Life of Jesus Christ ... From the Visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich", Rockford, 1986, vol. iv, pp. 378ff.). He was therefore free as a disincarnated spirit and could act — show himself, speak and eat — as an incarnated person.

But there is one thing, a specific feature, which the Gospel account mentions several times: that the risen Christ was difficult to recognize — that he hardly resembled the Master that the disciples and women knew so well. Thus, Mary Magdalena took him to be the gardener; that two disciples on the way to Emmaus only recognized him at the moment that he broke the bread; the disciples did not recognize his appearance by the sea of Tiberias — and it was only after he had spoken that John, initially alone, recognized him and "said to Peter: It is the Lord! And when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord ... leapt into the sea" (John xxi, 7-8).

Why? Because the risen Christ was without age: he did not have the appearance of Jesus on the eve of Calvary, nor that of the time of the baptism in the Jordan. Just as he was transfigured on Mt. Tabor, where he conversed with Moses and Elijah, so was he transfigured at his resurrection. The resurrected One was not only the synthesis of life and death, but also the synthesis of youth and old age. For this reason it was difficult for those who knew him between the ages of thirty and thirty-three to recognize him: at one time he appeared older to them, at another time younger than when they had known him.

And here we arrive at the full problem of the Resurrection Body. What is it?

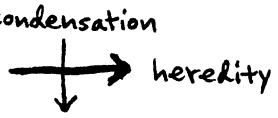
Modern science has come to the understanding that matter is only condensed energy — which, moreover, was known by alchemists and Hermeticists thousands of years ago. Sooner or later science will also discover the fact that what it calls "energy" is only condensed psychic force — which discovery will lead in the end to the establishment of the fact that all psychic force is the "condensation" of consciousness, pure and simple, i.e. spirit. Thus, it will be known for certain that we walk not thanks to the existence of legs, but rather that legs exist thanks to the will for movement, i.e. that it is the will for movement which has fashioned the legs so as to serve as its instrument. Similarly, it will be known that the brain does not engender consciousness but that it is the latter's instrument of action.

Our physical body is therefore an instrument composed of the will for action and for perception. Its genesis is the vertical line:

spirit
psychic force
energy
material organs.

Unfortunately, this vertical line is traversed by a horizontal one which runs counter to the freedom of the spirit in the fashioning — by the condensation of psychic forces and energy — of the material instrument in conformity with its task and mission. If our physical body were only the product of our own spirit alone, it would be the perfect instrument of our spiritual freedom. But, unfortunately, it is not so. Because the vertical line of condensation is

traversed by the horizontal line of heredity:



This constitutes the cross of human existence on earth.

Heredity interposes a foreign element between the individual free spirit and its instrument of action (the body). This foreign element is a factor which can change considerably the vertical process: spirit - psychic force - energy - material organs. It is another will which mingles with the process of the fashioning of the instrument of action of the individual spirit — of a kind that the body becomes the instrument not only of the individual spirit but also of the collective will of ancestors.

Whatever the physical mechanism of heredity may be, the essence of the transmission to the descendants of the physical or psychic characteristics of their ancestors is the imitation, voluntary or involuntary, of a ready-made model, instead of a purely creative act (from nothing, so to say) — that is, instead of pure and simple creation without any external model for it.

To imitate or to create — this is the choice and the trial of every soul in the process of incarnation. Now, there are strong — i.e. creative — souls, and there are weak — i.e. imitative — souls. The stronger a soul is, the greater the independence from the semi-hypnotic influence of the model presented by the preceding generations of the family chosen for the soul's incarnation. For this reason a strong incarnated soul shows in his or her psycho-physical personality fewer features traceable from the parents, and is in general less representative of family, people and race than of itself; he or she is more an individuality than a type. In contrast, a weak soul becomes an individual who seems to be only a pure and simple copy of the parents. In the former case — in the absence of sufficient information concerning the ancestry of the individual in question — it will certainly be said that, "the genes of a distant and unknown ancestor have prevailed". But whatever is said the fact remains incontestable that there are some cases where heredity is reduced to a minimum and that there are other cases where it manifests itself as almost all-powerful.

Heredity is the same imitation at work in the organic domain as that at work with children in the psychic domain — when they are learning to speak, to acquire useful habits and to form the first social qualities. If a child learns to speak by imitating its parents, this is only the consequence of the prior practice and more profound imitation of the nervous system, the circulatory system, and the structure of muscles and bones from the shaping of the organism in the uterus during the prenatal period.

Thus, every incarnated human being is the product of two shaping forces: the force of imitation or heredity, and the creative force or self-realization of the eternal individuality. The incarnated human being is at one and the same time representative of his ancestors and his individuality — the latter representing only itself.

One can also say that the incarnated human being is the product of "two heredities": "horizontal heredity" and "vertical heredity", the latter being the imprint of the individuality from above and the former being the imprint of the ancestors here below. This seeks to express

that he is the product of <u>two</u> imitations — horizontal and vertical, i.e. that in order to become what he is he owes it to imitation of his ancestors from the past and to that of himself above. In the last analysis, therefore, it is a matter on the one hand of horizontal heredity going back to the archetype (or the "ancestor of ancestors") of terrestrial heredity — Adam, and on the other hand of vertical "heredity" rising up to the Father who is in heaven — God. This is why it is so important to allow light from the dogma of the immaculate conception to convince us of its truth, for what is at stake is the vertical line of God-Man "heredity". "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John i) presupposes descent from above, instead of being the product of preceding generations. And it is this which holds out the promise that "to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God". Is it possible to state the re-establishment of God-man "vertical heredity" more openly and clearly?

Now the resurrection body is that of perfect freedom, i.e. the perfect manifestation of the individuality itself, without impediment on the part of heredity. Thus it is not an <u>instrument</u> which the soul makes use of, just as the soul itself is not an instrument which the spirit makes use of. For the very notion "instrument" presupposes a semi-mechanical relationship between master and implement; the master's will employs the implement without the latter consenting or making any contribution on its part, or taking any conscious and voluntary part of action. It is not so — it cannot be so — concerning the relationship between the soul and the resurrection body. The relationship between spirit, soul and resurrection body should be conceived of as a reflection of the Holy Trinity, i.e. as the re-establishment of the image and the likeness of God. This means to say that the relationship between spirit, soul and body will correspond, at the resurrection, to the relationship which exists between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Man will be triune, as God is triune. Man's eternal individuality will be the unity underlying his spirit, his soul and his body. The resurrection body will therefore be one of three "persons" of the human trinity, analogous to the divine Trinity. It will be the "person of action" of the individuality, just as the soul and the spirit will be the "person of heart" and the "person of contemplation". This means to say that the resurrection body will be the <u>magical realizing agent</u> of the individuality, whilst contemplating Eternity by way of his spirit and rendering it light-warmth in his soul.

Thus the resurrection body will have nothing mechanical, nothing automatic, about it. In no way will it be an assembly of implements pre-fabricated once and for all for the use of the will. In other words, it will not have ready-made and invariable "organs". No, the resurrection body will be absolutely mobile and will create for each action the "organ" which suits it. At one time it will be radiant light — such as Paul experienced on the way to Damascus — at another time it will be a current of warmth, or a breath of vivifying freshness, or a luminous human form, or a human form in the flesh. For the resurrection body will be <u>magical will, contracting and expanding</u>. It will be — we repeat — the synthesis of life and death; i.e. capable of acting here below as a living person and at the same time enjoying freedom from terrestrial links like a deceased person.

Will it be a new creation? A sudden and gratuitous gift from God?

In order to answer this question, we have first of all to deepen the idea that we have of the "body". Now, the general idea that we have of it is that it is a quantity of matter borrowed from Nature and organized in such a way as to serve as an instrument of action and as the scene of development of psychic life until its disintegration, i.e. death. "It has been made from dust and will return to dust" (Ecclesiastes iii,20). If we replace the term "dust" by the modern term "multitude of atoms", this formula from Ecclesiastes expresses well, still today, our general idea of the body, no matter whether or not we believe in the soul's immortality. Here, materialists and the spiritually-minded are in agreement, for both the former and the latter accept the empirical evidence of the complete disintegration of the individual body at death.

However, this is not the idea of the body according to Hermeticism. For, without denying the fact itself of the material disintegration of the body, Hermeticism denies the conclusion drawn from this fact that the individual body undergoes complete annihilation at death. Hermeticism advances the thesis that the body is essentially as immortal as the soul and spirit — that immortality is threefold and that the whole human being is essentially immortal. The immortality of the body such as Hermeticism understands it, differs, of course, from the relative immortality that is accorded to it by biology (reproduction and heredity) and chemistry and physics (conservation of matter and energy), since it is a matter of individual bodies and not of the survival of the species or the conservation of amorphous matter.

According to Hermeticism, the essence of the body is not the matter of which it is composed nor the energy which is produced in it, but rather the fundamental will underlying matter and energy. And it is this will which is indestructible, because it exists prior to the birth of the body — and without it birth (here in the sense of incarnation) would not be possible. More particularly, there is an essential difference between incarnation-birth and propagation-birth (in the sense of the propagation of the species). The former is adapted to the individuality who is incarnating, whilst the latter aims at pure and simple reproduction of the parents and ancestors without regard to the individuality who is going to incarnate: it is almost a "carte blanche", inviting no matter what individuality to incarnate by accomodating him to the conditions and facilities that heredity offers him. Incarnation-birth is thus ruled by the law of the vertical, whilst propagation-birth falls under the law of the horizontal. The first is orientated towards the individuality above; the second is orientated towards the species, the race and the family, i.e. the past below. In the first case the individuality incarnates himself; in the second case he falls into incarnation. This means to say that the individuality — in the case where his incarnation is ruled by the law of the vertical — descends consciously and of his own free will to birth, into an environment where he is wanted and awaited, whilst he is carried away by the general current of terrestrial attraction towards birth in the case where his incarnation comes under the law of the horizontal. Incarnation-birth presupposes conscious agreement between the will of the individuality above and the receiving will below. This is why all incarnation-births are announced, i.e. preceded by knowledge of the individuality who is going to incarnate himself due either to direct intuition or to intuition revealing itself in dream or, lastly, to revelation by means of a vision experienced by the future parents in full waking consciousness. Thus not only the Divine Incarnation was announced to Mary by the archangel Gabriel, but also the incarnation of John the Baptist to his father Zacharias, the

incarnation of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah (Genesis xvii, 16-19), the incarnation of Siddhartha (Gautama Buddha) to his mother Maya and his father Suddhodana, king of Kapilavastu, the incarnation of Krishna to his mother Devaki, etc. Whatever the difference in the modes of preliminary annunciation for these incarnation-births and whatever the difference in their significance — as in the caliber of individual whose incarnation-birth had been announced or revealed — in each particular case it is a matter of one thing in common, namely the law ruling the incarnation of the individuality, or birth under the sign of the vertical, which law demands that the two ends of the vertical line — above and below — are in free agreement of will. This is why every incarnation-birth implies two events: the revelation of the will above, or annunciation, and the act of consent of the will below. These two events — quite different as they are with respect to their mode, their significance, and the psychological and external circumstances in particular cases — are evident in the following formulas of the angelic salutation (the Ave): "Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae"... ("The Angel of the Lord announced to Mary"...) and "Ecce ancilla Domini, mihi fiat secundum verbum tuum" ("Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to thy word"). For these two formulas serve as column headings, so to say, comprising all particular cases of incarnation-births, i.e. births ruled by the law of the vertical.

Therefore, it is thus that the body, in accordance above all with the individuality and not according to the line of hereditary descent, is the work of the will of the individuality who is descending to incarnation acting hand in hand with the will receiving him below. And it is this united will which constitutes the indestructible and immortal kernel of the body. It is the "philosopher's stone", which arranges the matter and energy given by Nature in such a way that it is adapted to the individuality — so that it becomes an imprint of it. Such an "individualized" body certainly returns to Nature (at the moment of death) the substances and energies that it had been given, but its active principle, its formative will-energy, survives death. It is the living memory, the formative will-memory, of the body that is born — in so far as it is thus born — under the law of the vertical. Thus a poet (BAUDELAIRE), in a moment of illumination through love, said—

"And yet you will be similar to that Filth,
To that horrible infection,
Star of my eyes, sun of my nature,
You, my angel and my passion!

Yes! you will be like that, O queen of graces,
After the last sacraments,
When you go, under the grass and rich blossomings,
To rot among the bones.

Then, O my beauty, tell the vermin
Which will eat you with kisses,
That I have kept the form and the divine essence
Of my decomposed loves!"

(Et pourtant vous serez semblable à cette ordure,
À cette horrible infection,
Étoile de mes yeux, soleil de ma nature,
Vous, mon Ange et ma passion!

Oui! telle vous serez, ô la reine des grâces,
Après les derniers sacraments,
Quand vous irez, sous l'herbe et les floraisons grasses,
Moisir parmi les ossements.

Alors, ô ma beauté! Dites à la vermine
Qui vous mangera de baisers,
Que j'ai gardé la forme et l'essence divine
De mes amours décomposés!")

(Charles Baudelaire "Une Charogne / A Carrion", from "Les Fleurs du Mal", trsl. W. Flowers, Bantam, 1964, pp. 46-47).

-- Baudelaire will not be alone in keeping "the form and divine essence" of the body of the beloved. There is also One, One who is greater than he — and whose love is greater than his — who will guard them for all eternity. For if the love of the loving one preserves "the form and the divine essence" of the decomposed body of the person whom he loves, this is all the more reason for God — who is love — to preserve the form and the divine essence of this body. And it is this form and this essence which will resuscitate at the Resurrection. -

Thus, the resurrection body is prepared during the course of the ages. Because each particular human incarnation is effected according to the law of the c r o s s, i.e. it is vertical and horizontal at the same time and, in reality, it is only the proportion between the vertical of incarnation and the horizontal of heredity — i.e. the preponderance of the vertical over the horizontal or vice versa — which makes a particular incarnation emphasize either the law of the vertical or that of the horizontal. Hence, the process of the growth of the resurrection body is gradual. The resurrection body matures from incarnation to incarnation, although in principle it should be possible for a single incarnation to suffice. In fact, however, it is so that many incarnations are necessary to bring the resurrection body to maturity.

What is the destiny of the kernel of the indestructible body, "the form and the divine essence" of the body after death? Does it ascend with the soul and spirit to the spiritual world, leaving the mortal remains below?

Death —disincarnation— signifies the separation of the soul and spirit from the physical body — including its indestructible kernel or "resurrection body". Whilst the soul and spirit ascend to the spiritual world — accompanied by the forces of vitality (the "etheric" or "vital body") and psychic forces (the "astral body" — psychic habits, desires, character and psychic dispositions) — the resurrection body descends in the opposite sense, i.e. below, towards the center of the Earth. As it is active will during life, its descent is due to progressive relaxing of the will. The latter withdraws more and more within itself, instead of the effort concentrated previously on the task of rendering and maintaining the physical body in conformity with the soul and spirit of the incarnated individuality. This withdrawal of the "resurrection body" within itself after death amounts to what one understands by "rest" in speaking of the rest or peace of the dead. "Memento etiam, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum, qui nos praecesserunt cum signo fidei, et dormiunt in somno pacis" ("Remember, Lord, those who have died and rest in the sleep of peace, who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, especially those for whom we now pray...")

— this is said in remembrance of the dead during the Eucharistic prayer of the Catholic Mass. The "rest" that is the case with cemetery inscriptions and the "sleep of peace" of the prayer for the dead does not apply to saints (who are active and work miracles of healing and help after their death) or to souls in purgatory (who, in their state of suffering, are not at all sleeping or at rest) but rather to the indestructible kernels of the bodies of the dead. Thus Saul's sin in having made the witch of Endor evoke the departed prophet Samuel did not consist in his having made the immortal soul of Samuel descend to the earth, but rather in that he made the indestructible body of the prophet <u>ascend</u> from its place of rest below. Here is the relevant text:-

> "The woman (the witch) said: Whom shall I bring up for you? He (Saul) replied: Bring up Samuel for me. When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice... The king (Saul) said to her: Have no fear, what do you see? And the woman said to Saul: <u>I see a god coming up out of the earth</u>... Then Samuel said to Saul: Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up? (I Samuel xxviii, 11-15)

Similarly, in St. Matthew's account of the death of Jesus it is not a matter either of souls descending from above or of phantoms — remains electrified by the passions and habits of the dead — but rather of the resurrection bodies of saints ascending or "coming out of the tombs". Here is the relevant text:

> "Jesus cried out with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; <u>the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were</u> raised (καί πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ἠγέρθησαν — kai polla somata ton kekoimemenon hagion egerthesan). — And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many." (Matthew xxvii, 50-53)

Thus, the Gospel is specific concerning the fact that it was the <u>bodies</u> (σώματα - somata) <u>of the saints</u> (τῶν ἁγίον - ton hagion) which came out of the opened tombs and which appeared to a large number of people in Jerusalem, and not the souls of the saints which descended from heaven and which were revealed to the inhabitants of the holy city. On the other hand the bodies of the saints were not at all material bodies; otherwise they would have gone in procession to Jerusalem instead of <u>appearing</u> there. The Gospel also takes note that it was the bodies of the <u>saints</u> (ton hagion) and not just any kind of dead. This means to say that the bodies were "resurrection bodies" which had already attained a certain advanced degree of maturity.

With respect to the resurrection of Lazarus (the seventh miracle in the Gospel according to St. John), this is the unique case of a <u>threefold</u> miracle — namely the recall of the soul of a departed one to terrestrial life, the healing of a body which had already been four days in the tomb and from which there was "already an odor" (John xi, 39) and, lastly, the evocation of Lazarus' "resurrection body" and its union with the healed material body.

The three statements concerning Lazarus — "Lazarus is ill", "Lazarus has fallen asleep" and "Lazarus is dead" that one finds in the Gospel account (John xi) — are related to the threefold miracle of the healing, the awakening and the resurrection of Lazarus.

The A s s u m p t i o n of the Blessed Virgin is the unique event where the separation from the body did not take place at all, i.e. where death, such as we know it, did not occur at all. Instead of separating from the material body and from the soul in order to descend below "to

the place of rest of the sleep of peace", the "resurrection body" remained united with the soul and the material body, and ascended — united with the soul — to the spiritual world. With respect to the material body, it did not decompose but was wholly absorbed by the "resurrection body". It dematerialized, spiritualizing itself to the point of becoming one with the resurrection body — in its turn united inseparably with the soul of the Blessed Virgin. The tomb of the Blessed Virgin was in fact empty. The tradition which relates this is exact. One would search in vain for the terrestrial tomb of the Blessed Virgin; one would find nothing of it, since it does not exist. What exists is only the spot designated for laying to rest the body of the Virgin, but which never served this end.

The mystery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is not identical to that of the Resurrection. The latter is the last act of the drama of the Fall and the Redemption of mankind, whilst the Assumption brings out the history of the spirit and soul of non-fallen Nature. It is not a matter of the reintegration of a fallen being, but rather of the destiny of an entity who appeared in the fallen world without ever having been touched by original sin and the Fall that it brought with it, i.e. a <u>virgin</u> entity, in the most profound sense of this word.

The Blessed Virgin is therefore virgin Nature, virgin soul and virgin spirit since the dawn of the world, united and manifesting in a human person — Mary, daughter of Joachim and Anne. The Virgin Mary is therefore at one and the same time a human person and a cosmic entity: Wisdom (CHOKMAH חָכְמָה, Sophia Σοφία, Sapientia) according to Solomon, the Virgin of Light of the gnostic Pistis Sophia, the Virgin of the World (Kore Kosmu, Κόρη Κόσμου) of the ancient hermeticists, and the SHEKINAH of the Cabbalists. The dialogue between the archangel Gabriel and Mary at the Annunciation has therefore, outside of the human and angelic significance, a cosmic significance. It was in the name of the Divine Holy Trinity that the archangel announced the Incarnation to come, and it was in the name of the threefold holy Virgin Nature — Mother, Daughter and Holy Soul — that Mary gave the response which was the turning point of the history of the world: Ecce ancilla Domini, mihi fiat secundum verbum tuum (ἰδού ἡ δούλη κυρίου γένοιτο μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα σου — idou he doule kyriou genoito moi kata to rema sou — "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" — Luke i,38). It was Free Nature (Natura Naturans) and <u>non-fallen</u> Necessitated Nature (Natura Naturata) which gave their reply at the same time that Mary pronounced these words. The eternal dialogue between Creative Will and Executive Will — where divine Fire becomes Light, where Light becomes Movement, and where Movement becomes Form — was projected in time and concentrated in the dialogue between the Archangel and Mary!

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin was, consequently, neither disincarnation in the sense of separation of the soul and body, nor resurrection in the sense of union of the soul and the resurrection body, but rather the turning above — towards the spiritual world — of the current of life comprising spirit, soul and body: the ascent to heaven of the integral entity of the Blessed Virgin.

Thus, it follows from the preceding that the Resurrection is the union of the spirits and

the souls of the dead with their immortal bodies — their "resurrection bodies" — which will be awoken "by the sound of the trumpet" from above, and which will ascend to meet the descending souls. They will unite with the latter, never more to separate from them. Thus the "eternal incarnation" will begin, i.e. the epoch of cosmic history called in the Bible "the heavenly city of the New Jerusalem" (Revelation xxi).

The universal resurrection has, however, another important aspect which has given the XXth Major Arcanum of the Tarot its traditional name — "The Judgement". Though the Card represents only the resurrection, it nevertheless bears the name "The Judgement" — the last judgement being an essential part of the universal resurrection in the Tradition. Tradition not only associates the resurrection and the last judgement, but also regards them as identical, as a single event seen from two sides. On what basis does the Tradition draw an identification between the resurrection and the last judgement?

The resurrection is the final victory not only over <u>death</u> (as the separation of the soul from the body) but also over <u>sleep</u> (as the separation of the soul from the world of action) and over <u>forgetfulness</u> (as the separation of consciousness from the world of past memories). This means to say that resurrection signifies not only the re-establishment of the integral unity of the spirit, soul and body of the human being, but also the uninterrupted continuity of his activity and the uninterrupted continuity of his consciousness — the whole of his memory. Now, the emergence of complete memory of the entire past is equivalent, for consciousness, to the last <u>judgement</u>, where the whole past is reviewed in the light of conscience (conscience in French, Gewissen in German, sovest in Russian). It is conscience itself, the soul itself, which will judge itself. And it will then find that it is guilty under all the headings of accusation of divine law which live in the completely awakened conscience. And there will not be a single soul that will justify itself before its own awakened conscience. It is not authorized to justify itself. Justification lies in the realm of the divine and it is only the divine that is authorized to justify.

Thus, there will at first be the realization of the complete equality of all members of the human community in the consciousness of their errors and their faults. This consciousness will be common to great initiates, high priests, heads of nations, and simple workers in the diverse domains of human effort in the past.

This great experience to come of human equality — in the light of completely awakened conscience — is prefigured in the penitential rite of the Mass, during the prayer at the foot of the altar, where priest and congregation say together: "Confiteor Deo omnipotenti et vobis, fratres, quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo, opere et omissione: mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa" ("I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do..." — all strike their breast three times in saying the words: "mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa"). This rite, whose aim is to awaken the conscience of all and each is, at the same time, that of complete human <u>equality</u> before the divine law which operates in conscience. It prefigures the equality at the last judgement.

Thus, the last judgement will be essentially the experience by mankind of awakened conscience and completely restored memory. It will be mankind itself who will judge itself. It

will be mankind alone who will play the role of the accuser. God will not accuse anyone. He will only acquit, justify and forgive. It is in response to the "act of accusation" (that the emergence of complete memory of the whole past of mankind will call forth) that he will "open the Book of Life", i.e. he will bring to light what we have called the "third Akasha Chronicle" — the tableau of Divine Memory containing all that from the past of mankind which is worthy of eternity. This will be the divine "defense speech" at the last judgement — the act of indulgence, absolution, and pardon. The last judgement will be the Sacrament of Penance on a cosmic scale, comprising universal confession and universal absolution. It will be only the impenitents who will exclude themselves from the grace of universal absolution, although it is difficult to imagine impenitence in this situation. The Church Father ORIGEN could not do so, and believed that everyone including the hierarchies of evil with Satan at their head, will be saved. Was he right or wrong? By way of answer, I will pose these two questions:

1) Is there in the world any person or group of people who know with certain knowledge who will be impenitent in the distant future?
2) Is there in the world any person or group of people who have the authority to specify the limits of God's love and mercy? To state and decree that the love of God goes so far and no further?

These two questions are addressed to those who believe themselves to be in a position to affirm that Origen was wrong in believing in universal salvation. In cases where they cite the Scriptures in their answer — the Prophetic Books, the Gospels and the Apocalypse, which speak of the fate of the damned — they should take into consideration the fact that neither the Prophets, nor the Gospels, nor the Apocalypse treat the fate of the damned as inevitable for whoever this may be. They say that <u>if</u> human and hierarchical sinners are impenitent, <u>if</u> their conscience does not awaken by the end of time, <u>if</u> sinful souls refuse to the end to profit from the innumerable occasions which will be offered to them to turn towards the good, <u>then</u> their fate will be such as it is depicted in the Scriptures as the lot of the damned. In other words, the lot of the damned is certainly real, but there is no one who is to be excluded from salvation. It is not the fear of hell, but rather the love of God and of good which ought to motivate the choice of souls.

The last judgement will be the last crisis. The Greek word for judgement is krisis (κρίσις), i.e. crisis. Friedrich SCHILLER said rightly that "the history of the world is the judgement of the world", i.e. it is a continual crisis, the stages of which are "historical epochs". The last judgement will therefore be the culminating point of history. It will be simultaneously the aim, the meaning and the summary of history — history condensed, i.e. <u>the</u> crisis that is in question in all the particular crises of history. For this reason Jesus Christ, the moral and spiritual center of gravity of history, will be present there. The second Coming will be the objective manifestation of the stake of history. In this sense Jesus Christ will be the "judge" at the last judgement. His presence alone will set in relief all that which is not like him, all that which is incompatible with him for the awakened conscience.

But he will not restrict himself to being present; he will participate in the last judgement and will take an active part, namely that of Judge. But he will judge in his own way: he will not accuse, he will not condemn, and he will not impose punishments — rather he will give forces

to souls undergoing the trial that the awakening of conscience and complete memory entails. Christ's judgement is the comforting of those who judge themselves and his eternal commandment to those who judge others is: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone" (John viii,7). It is thus that Jesus Christ judged during his life, thus that he judges now, and thus that he will judge at the last judgement.

Our meditation on the XXth Arcanum of the Tarot — that of resurrection and the last judgement — is approaching an end. This is not to say that all that is essential has been said, but that the most essential of the essential is treated within the limits of the framework of an Arcanum of the Tarot — limits that we have to set in order to be able to carry through these "Meditations on the Major Arcana of the Tarot". Thus, it is now a matter of summarizing.

Resurrection is the magical operation, simultaneously divine and human, in which divine love and human love overcome forgetfulness, sleep and death. For love never forgets; it is always vigilant; and it is stronger than death.

At the resurrection the human spirit and soul descend from above and unite with their immortal body which ascends to meet them.

It is the love of the Father which makes souls and spirits descend to eternal incarnation; and it is the love of the Mother which makes the resurrection bodies — which rest in the womb of the Mother — ascend.

Resurrected man will be the image and likeness of God; he will be triune as God is triune. The three principles of man — spirit, soul and body — will constitute the human trinity after the manner of the Holy Trinity, where there will be three persons and their fundamental unity will be the human individuality.

But the resurrection is at the same time the last judgement. As PAUL said:

> "... each man's work will become manifest, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.."
>
> (I Corinthians iii, 13-15)

// End of the XXth Letter //

The XXIst Arcanum of the Tarot

Meditation on the Major Arcanum of the Tarot: "The DOLT" or "The FOOL" "Le MAT" or "Le FOU" (Le Fol)

> Let no one deceive himself. If any one among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly before God. (St. PAUL, I Corinthians iii, 18-19)
>
> Folly is a condition which prevents that which is true from being grasped. (Plato, Definitions)*
>
> ...consciousness succumbs all too easily to unconscious influences, and these are often truer and wiser than our conscious thinking... Personality need not imply consciousness. It can just as easily be dormant or sleeping.
> (Carl Gustav JUNG, "Conscious, Unconscious and Individuation")**

Dear Unknown Friend,

I owe you, in the first place, an explanation of the fact of having changed — apparently arbitrarily — the order of the Cards of the Major Arcana of the Tarot, by making the Arcanum "The Dolt" or "The Fool" follow the XXth Arcanum "The Judgement". The Arcanum "The Dolt or "The Fool" does not bear any number and therefore corresponds to zero, while the Card of the Arcanum "The World" bears the number XXI in the Marseille Tarot pack. Thus, here is the reason — not for changing the number of the Card, but rather for why we have made the meditation on the Arcanum "The Dolt" or "The Fool" follow that on the XXth Arcanum "The Judgement" and before the meditation on the XXIst Arcanum "The World":

The principal reason is that the meditation on the Arcanum "The Dolt" or "The Fool" cannot conclude the series of meditations on the Major Arcana of the Tarot, which series is a "school" of spiritual training, i.e. an organic "System" of spiritual exercises. For the meditation on the Arcanum "The Dolt" or "The Fool", as a spiritual exercise, is not of a nature to summarize the whole preceding series of 21 meditations on the Tarot, to play the role of the last point of view of the experience that the symbolism of the Tarot renders possible.

There are still other reasons. One of them is indicated by Paul MARTEAU in his book "Le Tarot de Marseille", where he says: "This Card is not specified by any number, for it would be necessary to put "0" or "22". It cannot be "0", otherwise The Fool would then represent the universal indefinite, when he is actually mobile and symbolizes a passage of evolution. On the other hand, it cannot be characterized by "22", i.e. by two passivities, implying inaction,

*Cf. Plato, "Dialogues apocryphes" in "Oeuvres complètes", vol. xiii, French trsl. by J. Souilhé, Paris, 1930, p. 173.
**Tran. R.F.C. Hull, "The Collected Works of C.G. Jung", vol. 9, part vi, London, 1959, pp. 282-283.

which is absolutely contrary to the bearing of the personage represented on the Card." (Paul Marteau, "Le Tarot de Marseille", Paris, 1949, p.93) And here is a third reason: —

At St. Petersburg in Russia, around fifty years ago, there was a group of esotericists who composed the flower of the capital's "intelligentsia". This group was internally hierarchical, i.e. it comprised "grades" — Martinist, Templar and Rosicrucian. It was, properly said, a school of teaching and training comprising three "courses" or "classes" — first or Martinist, second or Templar and highest or Rosicrucian.

At the head of the whole school was the professor of special mathematics from Pages College (Pageskiy Korpus) in St. Petersburg, Professor Gregory Ottonovich Mebes.

Now, it was after the Bolshevik revolution (which, it goes without saying, put an end to this group and its work) that the one who is writing these lines met some members of this dispersed group and became friends with them. The friendship being true, i.e. based on unreserved mutual confidence, they (who belonged to the so-called "Rosicrucian" elite of the group) transmitted all that they knew and recounted everything concerning the work of their group, including the crises and painful experiences that they had undergone. This was in 1920. It was then that the one who is writing these lines — although he had already studied the masterly book by the engineer SCHMAKOV, "The Major Arcana of the Tarot" (Velikiye Arkany Taro — a book almost twice as large as, for example, Oswald WIRTH's "Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge" or Paul MARTEAU's "Le Tarot de Marseille") and the book on the Tarot by P.D.OUSPENSKY in 1917 — was struck to learn to what degree collective work on the Tarot can be fruitful for study, research, training and advancement in the esoteric domain. For the whole work of the Martinist-Templar-Rosicrucian group was founded on the Tarot. Study of the Cabbala, Magic, Astrology, Alchemy and Hermeticism was guided and inspired by the Tarot. This gave the whole work an exceptional coherence and organic unity. Every problem concerning the Cabbala, Magic, Astrology, Alchemy, etc., was treated as relating to a particular Arcanum of the Tarot. Thus, for example, one meditated on the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in order to derive their Cabbalistic meaning, in the light of the 22 Major Arcana of the Tarot. And one came to the conclusion that each letter of the Hebrew alphabet — understood Cabbalistically — corresponds to a particular Major Arcanum of the Tarot.

Now, it is the letter SHIN (ש), the 21st letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which was attributed to the Arcanum "The Dolt" or "The Fool". It was said that this is the letter of of the Arcanum of Fire.
And confidentially it was added that the <u>esoteric name</u> of the Arcanum "The Fool" or "The Dolt" is AMOR (Love).

Although the teaching and the experiences of this group of St. Petersburg esotericists lives now in the soul of the author of these Letters only as a general impulse received in his youth to penetrate the symbolism of the Tarot more deeply — indeed, until now he has not at all drawn upon this teaching for these Letters (the Tarot having been revealed to him during the 45 years which followed in a new light and surpassing, with respect to its significance and its depth, all that he had learned from the teaching and experience of the St. Petersburg

group) — there is however one exception, namely the one I have cited above, i.e, that the Arcanum "The Fool" (or "The Dolt") corresponds to the letter SHIN and that consequently its number is 21, and its esoteric name is Love.

This is why, dear Unknown Friend, the meditation on the Arcanum "The Dolt" follows that on the Arcanum "The Judgement" and precedes the meditation on the Arcanum "The World". It is a matter, therefore, beyond the two reasons concerning the scope of meditative work on the Tarot and the significance of the number 21, of putting a memorial wreath on the non-existent tomb (i.e. non-existent here below) of the group of St. Petersburg esotericists from the beginning of this century. --

First of all, let us examine the Card. It represents a man in baggy dress who is walking, leaning on a staff and carrying a hanging bag on another staff that he holds on his right shoulder. In walking, he is attacked from behind by a dog who is in the process of ripping his trousers. The man is wearing a yellow bonnet topped by a red ball; he has a blue collar with points terminating in small bells; he is wearing blue trousers and red slippers. His over-vest is red with blue arms coming out of yellow sleeves; he has a yellow belt or girdle to which little bells are attached. In a word, he has the clothing of a traditional medieval clown or fool.

The Fool is walking from left to right. He holds his staff with his right hand and with his left hand he balances on his right shoulder the staff from which the bag is hanging. His head is turned three-quarters to the right. So it is the Fool who has the tendency to the right, the Fool of good, not of evil, which is also evident from the fact that he does not defend himself against the dog — which he could easily chase away by means of the staff.

The Fool of good— ... It suffices to say these words in order to evoke the pale and thin figure of Don Quixote de la Manche — the knight-errant who made everyone laugh and who, from his life, merits the epithet "El Loco" (The Fool) and who, after his death, merits that of "El Bueno" (The Good). O Don Quixote, you emerge from the pages of Miguel CERVANTES' novel as a literary figure, but you have taken on a singular life, much more intense and real than that of a literary figure! You haunt the imagination from one generation to another, to the point of visionary experience. At evening time in an arid and rocky land, when the shadows are lengthening does one not see you silhouetted in distorted profile, of tall and stiff stature mounted on an emaciated nag?

Imagination, vision... what am I to say? One can meet you often in historically difficult situations — which resemble the arid and distorted landscape — where hearts have become hardened and heads have become obstinate. It is you... it is your voice which resounded more loudly than the beating of drums around the guillotine, one day in the month of Thermidor or Fructidor in the year II or III (of the French Republican calendar), with a cry from the top of the scaffolding: Long live the King! — before your chopped-off head rolled to the ground. It is you also who, in the presence of the jubilant revolutionary populace, tore down from the wall and ripped up a red placard announcing to the people of St. Petersburg the dawn of a New Era in Russia... and who was promptly run through by the bayonets of the red guards

present. It is you again who declared openly to the German military authorities of the invaded and occupied Netherlands in 1941 that Germany, by occupying the land, was infringing the Hague Conventions that Germany herself had signed thirty years previously...

Don Quixote de la Manche acts. For Cervantes did not at all invent him, but only described him such as he appeared to him in Castille in the time of the twilight of the knighthood. Don Quixote existed and acted long before Cervantes, just as he continues to exist and act long after him. For he lives — from century to century — the life of an archetype, by revealing himself during the course of the ages through lots of people in lots of ways. Cervantes depicted him as a knight-errant, and the anonymous image-makers of the Middle Ages present him to us as the DOLT or the FOOL of the Tarot. As an image, the Fool is medieval. This is obvious. But as an idea, as an archetype, and, lastly, as an Arcanum, what might his origin be? Greek? I should think so. Egyptian? I readily admit it. More ancient still? Why not?

Ideas, archetypes, Arcana are ageless. It is only their representation, their imaged symbol, which can be attributed to a determined epoch. And this applies not only to the "Fool", but also to the "Magician", the "Papesse", the "Empress", the "Emperor", the "Pope", the "Lover", the "Chariot", "Justice", the "Hermit", the "Wheel of Fortune", "Force", the "Hanged Man".... For the Arcana of the Tarot are more than symbols and even more than spiritual exercises: they are magical entities, active initiating archetypes. —

Not only Don Quixote, but also Orpheus, the wandering Jew, Don Juan, Tijl Eulenspiegel, Hamlet and Faust haunt the imagination of the western world.

Orpheus — such was the suffering of separation from the soul of his deceased love that it became magic, magic surpassing the river of sleep, forgetfulness and death which separates the dead from the living. Orpheus is present always and everywhere where the love of a soul torn away by death is not content with pious and resigned commemoration, but aspires to find and meet the departed one beyond the threshold of death. Such was Orpheus' love for Eurydice and such, also, was Gilgamesh's love for his friend and brother Eabani. And who can say how many human hearts have beaten, beat today, and will beat in the future, in union with that of Orpheus and that of Gilgamesh, the Babylonian hero?

The wandering Jew, or Ahasverus, is the archetype of the "other immortality" — that of crystallization, which was in question in the Letter on the XIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot "Death". He represents the principle and the soul of magic aspiring to the coagulation of the vital body (etheric body) to the point where it becomes "stone" — too hard for Death's scythe. The formula underlying this magic is the reverse of that of Life and Grace; it is "Tu es non dignus ut intres sub tectum meum" ("You are not worthy to come under my roof"), i.e. the reverse of the formula "Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectus meum: sed tantum dic verbum, et sanabitur anima mea" ("Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof: but only speak the word and my soul will be healed"). This is the last secret and the Great Arcanum of those who sculpt themselves into stone and who want, with the resulting stones, to build the Temple of Humanity (cf. the Meditation on the XVIth Arcanum "The Tower of Destruction"). It goes without saying that it is only a handful amongst them who know this; the others, the majority, do not suspect it at all.

Don Juan is not purely and simply a blasphemous dissolute; he is rather a hierophant of this small god of great power known in antiquity under the name of Eros or Amor (Love). It is the magic of Eros that he represents, and it is the mysteries of Eros over which he presides in the capacity of a priest.

For if it were not thus so, if he were only a dissolute, pure and simple, how could he have exercised such power upon the imagination of poets such as Molière, Thomas Corneille, Lord Byron, Lorenzo da Ponte, Mozart (in music) and Alexis Tolstoy? It is above all the mystery poem of the latter which reveals the profound essence of Don Juan who, according to Alexis Tolstoy, was neither a blasphemous dissolute nor a false-hearted seducer, nor even a brutal adventurer, but rather an obedient and courageous servant of this childlike divinity who loves and commands élan, enthusiasm and ardor, and who detests and forbids the weighing, measuring and calculating of reason with its laws of utility and advantage, circumspection and respect for conventions and, lastly, its priority of a cold head over a warm heart. However, Love has not only its right to exist, but also its transcendental metaphysics, philosophy and mysticism. For Alexis Tolstoy, Don Juan was more than a victim or dupe of Love — this apparently capricious goddess. He embraced her philosophy and mysticism and was therefore her conscious collaborator, her hierophant initiated into her mysteries. And it is thus that he has become an <u>archetype — the archetype of love for its own sake</u>, the Lover par excellence.

Don Juan lives through the energy of amorous influence for the energy of amorous influence — by nourishing it and maintaining it like a fire which should never be extinguished. This is because he is conscious of the value of this fire and of the mission that this fire has in the world. In the eternal conflict that there is between law — of right, of reason, and of the divine — and love, he takes the side of love, for which courage is necessary. And it is thus that Don Juan represents an idea, an archetype, an arcanum. He represents the young man on the Card of the VI th Arcanum of the Tarot "The Lover", who has chosen the fire of Love as such and multiplicity instead of the unicity of the love of his eternal sister soul — since Babylon, the Woman appointed to the mysteries of erotic magic, has convinced him.

Tijl Uelenspiegel, the Flemish tramp from Damme, near Bruges — the hero of numerous popular accounts of mystification and farce, and also the tragic hero of the epic by COSTER — is the archetype of revolutionary anarchism who, as a consequence of complete disenchantment in human authority, has neither faith nor law. His is the spirit of rebellion against all authority in the name of the freedom of the individual — the freedom of a vagabond who has nothing, who obeys no one, who is afraid of nothing, who expects no recompense and who fears no chastisement, beyond as well as here below.

The mocking spirit who, at the same time, turns the temples and altars of humanity upside down, making them collapse by means of his magic wand: ridicule. This wand, in touching things, transforms them: the solemn into the pompous, the moving into the sentimental, the courageous into the presumptuous, tears into snivelling, love into passing fancy .... For this wand, also "has no other aim than to condense a great quantity of fluid emanated by the operator... and to direct the projection of this fluid onto a determined point" (PAPUS, "Traité méthodique de la magie pratique", Paris, 1970, p. 204). And this "condensed fluid" of the operator is the operator's condensed faith that everything is only a great farce.

Tijl Uelenspiegel is an archetype because he is at work with his wand always and everywhere whenever a mocking spirit thinks of himself as being "enlightened" by turning the things, ideas and ideals to which others hold into ridicule. Thus not only the poetic verses of the Russian Bolshevik militant atheist Demyane BEDNY, but also the works of such a respectable and thinker as VOLTAIRE, show the presence and influence of Tijl Uelenspiegel. However, Tijl Uelenspiegel — in so far as he is an archetype — is not only purely and simply a mocker. This is only one side of his being. There is another side to him — it is that of militant anarchism: the revolt of the humbler people against those who give the laws and prescribe what they should and should not do. The following act of a comparatively recent date is an example of this:

The sailors of a Russian Baltic fleet brought success to the Russian Bolshevik revolution in October 1917 by opening cannon fire from the cruiser "Aurora" upon the last nest of resistance of troops loyal to the democratic government (a battalion of women volunteers) at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, and taking it by assault. Thus they were the incontestable and celebrated heroes of the October Revolution. However, it is a no less incontestable fact — although never celebrated — that the same sailors of this Baltic fleet rose up in February 1921 against the regime that they had decisively helped to establish in 1917. They took possession of the naval fortress at Kronstadt and a regular war of seige ensued. After a month of seige Kronstadt was taken by assault from the élite of the Red Guards — cadets or "coursants" (students of the Bolshevik naval school).

Now, to what was this radical change of attitude of the sailors of this Baltic fleet due? It was due to the fact that the sailors were fighting in October 1917 for anarchic freedom — for the soviets (councils) of workers, peas nts, soldiers and sailors, without generals and admirals, without ministers, i.e. without those placed above the soviets. What they desired was the re-establishment of the community of comrades which existed in the XVIth, XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries known under the name "Sietch' Zaporozhskaya" (cossacks of the Ukraine) — the ideal of the communist anarchist community. However, in 1921 they realized that they had been mistaken. It was not a community of brothers and comrades which arose from the October Revolution, but rather state control with a new, strong, dictatorial, police-regulated state, governed by a clique who had the say of everything in the face of a mass who had the say of nothing. The sailors of Kronstadt, having well understood the deception, took recourse to arms. And it was again Tijl Uelenspiegel who was invisibly at their head, just as he was at the head of the crowd who took the Bastille, and just as he was the author of the Carmagnole, the revolutionary round danced in 1793, and of the song which accompanied it...

Sören KIERKEGAARD, the Danish religious thinker who initiated the philosophical and psychological current known under the name "existentialism", said:

> "In modern philosophy there has been more than enough talk about speculation beginning with doubt, but on the other hand, as far as I have been able to concern myself occasionally with such reflections, I have sought in vain for illumination upon the point of difference between doubt and despair. I will here attempt to throw light upon this distinction... Doubt is a despair of thought; despair is a doubt of the personality; hence it is why I hold so stoutly to the category of choice, which is my solution, the very nerve of my views on life..." (Soren Kierkegaard, "Either/Or"; trsl. W. Lowrie, vol. ii, London,

1944, pp. 177-178)

The "existential" philosophy of our time thus differs from traditional speculative philosophy in that it is founded on despair, i.e. upon the doubt of the whole personality, while speculative philosophy is founded on doubt, i.e. on the despair of thought alone. Now all despair, all doubt of the personality, amounts to — and is summarized by — Hamlet's famous question: "To be or not to be?" For just as Kierkegaard, the Danish thinker, is the author of modern existentialism, so is Hamlet, the prince of Denmark — hero of the legend recounted by Saxo Grammaticus and of the drama by SHAKESPEARE — the very archetype of existentialism, the despair of the personality. He is the archetype of the isolation of completely autonomous consciousness, cut off both from Nature and the spiritual world — man at the z e r o point between two fields of gravitation: terrestrial and celestial.

Doubt is more than a psychological state of indecision; it is the soul's sojourn in the intermediary sphere between the two fields of attraction — terrestrial and celestial — from which there is no other means of escape than a pure and simple act of faith, issuing from the soul itself without heaven and earth taking any part in it. It is therefore a matter of an act of the free personality in the face of complete silence from heaven and earth. Now, Hamlet is the archetype of this trial, where the following is at stake: either an act of faith, or despair and madness.

Doctor FAUST is the synthesis of the forms of madness and wisdom of the six archetypes whom we have mentioned above:-- as Don Quixote he is in pursuit of unparalleled exploits; -- as Orpheus he is searching for a return to the light from the darkness of death from centuries past of Helen of Troy, whom he loves passionately in spite of the centuries and the threshold of death which separate him from her;--as Don Juan he "sees Helen in every woman" and is searching for the "eternal feminine" (das Ewig-Weibliche) in and through particular loves; -- as Ahasverus he rejuvenates himself by means of dark magic so as to begin another life and a new terrestrial biography without interruption through death — i.e. a new incarnation without a preceding period of disincarnation; -- as Tijl Uelenspiegel he does away with every allegiance and all religious, scientific and political authority, and in Mephistopheles' company he mocks moral and other restraints impeding the freedom to dare and to will; -- as Hamlet, lastly, he has the trial of great existential doubt whether "to be or not to be" in the guise of the question "to live or not to live".

But beyond all that which he has in common with these six archetypes, Faust represents — at least, as GOETHE conceived him — yet another archetype, an eternal archetype, namely that of the one who is tried and tempted: eternal Job, whom we find in the Bible. Faust is Job in the epoch of humanism, i.e. at the dawn of the modern age. Just as with the Biblical Job, he is the stake in a wager proposed to God by Mephistopheles, and accepted. But Faust's trial and temptation differs from that of the Biblical Job in that it does not consist in the reverse of fortune and in ill luck, but rather in favorable results and success. Mephistopheles has full power, accorded to him from above, to satisfy all Faust's desires. And the trial of which it is a matter here amounts to whether the relative and transitory world can for ever satisfy Faust — the man issuing from the modern age, the modern man. Whether all pleasures here below, in detail and in general, can anesthetize man's aspiration to the absolute and eternal by rendering him wholly satisfied and happy. Job demonstrated that the sorrow that the world can inflict is incapable of tearing the human soul away from God; Faust demonstrated that this is so also with the joy that the world can offer.

Oswald SPENGLER, the author of "The Decline of the West" (Untergang des Abendlandes),

calls modern man "Faustian man" ("der faustiche Mensch") — and he was right to call him so. For Faust is indeed the dominant archetype of the epoch following the Middle Ages, which is characterized by the enormous growth of mankind's power over Nature and of the facilities for satisfying his desires — comprising those of the boldest of magicians of the past: flying through the air, seeing and hearing at a great distance, travelling without horses (e.g. by car), the evocation of living images and sounds of past events or events at a great distance, etc. It is just as if the prince of this world has obtained full power to satisfy, one after the other, all the desires of contemporary mankind, so as to demonstrate for himself that the power and enjoyment of the relative and transitory world here below can make man forget the absolute and eternal, can make him forget God — and with respect to God, it is so as to demonstrate to the hierarchies of evil that man is of another caliber than the relative and the transitory, that whatever the power and enjoyment is here below it can never satisfy him. The trial of our epoch is that of Faust. It is the trial of satisfied desires.

The most recent phenomenon of our epoch is communism — or, if you wish, social and collective state control. It openly pursues the aim of satisfying as completely as possible the needs and desires of as large a number of people living on earth as possible. Well, let us suppose that it succeeds in Russia. Everyone will have well-furnished accomodation with a telephone, a radio, a television set, a refrigerator, a washing machine... And what then? Yes, cinema, theatre, concerts, ballet, sport... And what then? Yes, science will furnish new occasions and directions for activity, for the imagination and for... desire. One will visit the moon, the planets... And what then? — There will be unparalleled adventures to experience and to know about, which as yet we cannot imagine — as, for example, the discovery of the existence of other intelligent beings, other "mankinds" on the planets... And what then? No answer.

No, there is certainly an answer: it is given by the parable of the prodigal son. What is the value of television sets, washing machines, supersonic aircraft, spaceships, flights to the planets and galactic exploration in comparison with the loving embrace of the Father upon the return of his son to the parental home?

The trial of our time is that of satisfied desires. This applies not only to communists, capitalists and materialists, but also, and no less, to — I shall not say esotericists, but — occultists and magicians. For they also are under the sign of the same trial.

Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, for example, took part in the operations of ceremonial magic in the circle of Martinez de Pasqually's disciples. This magic proved itself to him to be effective and real. And it was after having been convinced of the reality and efficacy of ceremonial magic that — in full knowledge of what he was doing — he turned his back on these magical practices and embraced the mysticism of Jacob Boehme: the world of ineffable experiences, of relationships between the soul and God. Therefore he passed through the trial. Magical phenomena — the "passes" — did not succeed in arresting him on his path towards the absolute and the eternal, while his former companion and co-disciple, Jean Baptiste WILLERMOZ, although spiritually orientated and sincerely believing, remained devoted to ceremonial magic and initiation ritualism until his death.

Eliphas LÉVI, the author of "Dogme et rituel de la haute magie", was without doubt the pioneer of the theory and practice of the ceremonial magic of the XIXth century. It was he who had the courage — or the audacity, if you wish — to present magic to the light of day as something real and,

at the same time, as something intelligible ... and this after the vogue for the enlightenment and in the midst of the vogue for materialism! Can one reproach him for lack of courage? However, H.P. BLAVATSKY reproached him. She said that he had subsequently disavowed his own magical teaching and turned to Christian mysticism — for fear of the ecclesiastical authorities taking him amiss... The truth is, however, that Eliphas Lévi — this intrepid magician who evoked Apollonius of TYANA in London — having surpassed the bounds of ceremonial magic, concentrated on the mysticism and gnosis of Christian Hermeticism. He passed through the Faustian trial, just as Saint-Martin did. For this reason, what Saint-Martin wrote to Kirchberger, Baron of Liebisdorf, on the reasons for his conversion from ceremonial magic to mysticism is applicable also in Eliphas Lévi's case:

> "... the initiations I passed through in my first school, and which I have long since left behind me, to attend to the only initiation which is truly after my own heart... I can assure you I have received by the inward way, truths and joys a thousand times higher than those I have received from without... there is no initiation, but that of God only, and his Eternal Word within us..." (L. Schauer and A. Chuquet, "La correspondance inédite de Louis Claude de Saint-Martin", trsl. E.B. Penny, letters XIX and CX in "Saint-Martin's Correspondence", Exeter, 1863, pp. 77-78, 375)

This applies also to Paul SÉDIR (Yvon de Loup), who was also devoted to practical magic and for two years utilized to this effect a room that he rented on the ground floor of 4, rue de Savoie in Paris (cf. Dr. Philippe ENCAUSSE, "Sciences occultes ou vingt-cinq années d'occultisme occidental. Papus, sa vie, son oeuvre", Paris, 1949, p. 49). He was a member and dignitary of at least 20 fraternities, more or less secret — for example, the Cabbalistic Order of the Rose Cross, the Order of Martinists, the H.B. of L., the F.T.L., etc. But in January 1909 (his activity in this domain began in 1888) he retired from these Fraternities, forsaking all the posts and titles that had been conferred on him. This surprised friends of his of long standing.

> "But there was in his life an outward circumstance, a solemn and decisive event, which made him grasp the emptiness of secret sciences and societies, and which placed him for ever upon the sole way of the Gospel." (Dr. Philippe Encausse, "Le Maître Philippe de Lyon", Paris, 1958, p. 80)

This event was his meeting with Maître PHILLIPPE of Lyons. Sédir himself wrote in a letter to "L'Echo du Merveilleux" in May 1910 (reprinted in "Bulletin des Amitiés Spirituelles", April, 1933):

> "... For my reckoning I have, together with some companions, done the rounds of all esotericisms and explored all crypts with the most fervent sincerity, with the most vivid hope of success. But none of the certainties that I eventually grasped appeared to me to be the Certainty.
>
> Rabbis have communicated unknown manuscripts to me; alchemists have admitted me to their laboratories; Sufis, Buddhists and Taoists have led me, during long late-night sessions, to the abodes of their gods; a Brahmin let me copy his tables of mantrams; a yogi gave me the secrets of contemplation. But, one evening, all that these admirable men had taught me became for me like the soft haze which rises at dusk after an over-warm day." (Dr. Philippe Encausse, "Le Maître Philippe de Lyon", Paris, 1958, pp. 80-81)

Papus also had the decisive meeting mentioned by Sédir. It was no less decisive for him than

for Sédir, concerning the relationship between certainties and the Certainty, between values and the Value. But — being a doctor, and accustomed in the first place to consider the good of the patients who put their confidence in him — he did not forsake any of the responsibilities accepted in the past and did not retire from any group for which he had assumed responsibility, although his heart was already elsewhere ... What changed for him was the priority of Christian spirituality, which he showed in a radical way — which won him the reproach of "having a soft spot for Catholicism" on the part of Robert AMBELAIN and merited his being treated as an inevitable "Jesuit" by certain Freemasons. But Papus' evolution — whatever one says, and whether it pleases one or not — was nothing other than the Faustian trial crowned with success.

These examples, although we could cite several more, suffice to illustrate the nature and experience of the Faustian trial in the domain of occultism. Every occultist must undergo this trial. For it is only after having passed through it, i.e. after having known arbitrary magic, that an occultist finds the Divine Magic, Gnosis and Mysticism of Christian Hermeticism. Then he will transform himself from a scholar into a Sage, from a magician into a Mage, from a gnosticiser into a Gnostic and from an amateur in the mysteries into a Mystic. So be it.

The Faustian trial and the human prototype of Faust are prefigured in antiquity by the personality — whether legendary or real is not important — of Cyprian the MAGE, who became a Christian and who, subsequently, was bishop of Nicodemia and, lastly, was martyred under the emperor Diocletian. The following are some extracts from the Coptic version of his "Confession" (the legend of Cyprian comprises three works: Conversion, Confession and Martyrdom):

"This is the repentance (μετάνοια) of Cyprian the Mage (μάγος) who became a Christian thanks to the virgin Justina; who was, subsequently, bishop in the town of Nicodemia; and who, lastly, with Justina, obtained the crown of a martyr under the king Diocletian, on the 20th Phaopi, in peace. AMEN...

I am Cyprian, he who was consecrated, from his adolescence, in the temple of Apollo, and who was instructed from childhood in the deceptions that the Dragon (δράγον) accomplishes. For, having not yet attained seven years of age, I was already devoted to the Mysteries of Mithra... And when I was fifteen years old, I served Demeter and I walked before her, bearing torches in the procession. With respect to her daughter, who is called the "virgin" (παρθένος) I bore her mourning attire, clothed in brilliant clothing... I went to Olympus... that is called the "mountain of the gods". I was initiated into the secrets of the Image (εἰκών), into her way of speaking, which consists of a succession of noises, which are produced regularly at the time of a manifestation (φαντασία) of demons, when they reveal themselves... And I also saw the hearts of the demons, some singing, others, in contrast, setting traps, beguiling, and provoking trouble. And I saw arising before me the escort of each of the gods and goddesses. I passed 40 days and 40 nights in these places, nourishing myself solely from the sap of trees, after sunset... When I attained the age of 15, I was instructed by the priests, the 7 prophets and the prophetess of the Devil (ἀντεκείμενος) with whom this latter they had mouth to mouth conversation. It is they, in fact, who procure Work for each of the demons... The Devil (διάβολος) taught me how the earth is firmly established on its foundations. He taught me the law of the Air and the Ether. I visited the Sea as far as Tartar (τάρταρος). Lastly, I went to Argos; I celebrated

the festival of Hera, and there I learned how one separates women from their husbands and how one sows hate between brothers and friends. I learned of the unity of the Air and the Ether, and of the way in which the Earth enters into combination with Water and, on the other hand, how Water does so with the Ether.

And I left also for a town called Thalis (Elide?) which is in the country that is called Lacedemon. I learned to know the mysteries of Helios and Artemis, the law of light and darkness, of the stars and their orbits... Subsequently, I went to the people that are called Phrygians. From them I learned to know divination... And I knew also of the members of the body which make sudden convulsive movements, of the nerves which retract, provoking itching, and of others which get caught up in one another; I knew of the art of setting a trap with words, of the numbers that one obtains when one throws the fingers forward and also the numbers which fly away suddenly from the lips of men. I created things with my words, and I established that they were real..... I also went to Memphis and Heliopolis... I visited their hidden underground chambers where the demons of the air enter into union with the demons who dwell on the earth; I learned to know how they lead men into temptation... and how the spirits (πνεῦμος) struggle with demons. And I learned to know how many Archontes of darkness there are, and the relationships that they have with souls and bodies deprived of reason, down to and including the Fish; and I knew what work is accomplished by them (the Archontes); the one provokes the shunning of a man; another acts on his intelligence so that the man gives himself up to him; another acts on his memory; another inspires terror in him; another proceeds by way of guileful ruses; another by surprise; another provokes forgetfulness; another acts upon the crowd so that they revolt; and many other phenomena which are produced in the same way... I saw the souls of giants imprisoned in darkness — burdening the shadow of the earth — who appear like one who is bearing a heavy load. I saw dragons enter into contact with demons and I felt the bitter taste of venom coming out of their mouths... venom which the spirits (πνεῦμα) of the Air make use of to cause all these ills for human beings... I lived in these places: the spirit (πνεῦμα) of lying appearing in numerous aspects; the spirit of lewdness having a threefold face...; the spirit of anger which is like a hard stone... the spirit of trickery with a great number of sharpened tongues... the spirit of hate who is like a blind man, with eyes placed at the back of the head, all the time fleeing from the light...; the spirit of spitefulness who presents himself like a dried up bone... I saw also the appearance of the vainglory, virtue and sterile justice with which the demons deceived the Greek philosophers; they are, in fact, totally impotent and without force. Certain are like dust, while others are like shadows... The number of demons who acted as idols, leading the Greek philosophers into error, is 365. I could not tell you about all these things one by one without writing a number of books; but I shall tell you of some which will make the intensity of my blasphemy apparent.

When I attained 30 years of age, I left Egypt for the country of the Chaldeans, in order to learn how the Ether is. The people there say that it is established above the Fire; but the Sages among them claim that it dwells above the Light... the 365 parts of the Ether were enumerated to me, each part of which possesses its own nature and enters into contact with the force of material substances which are our body... Certain amongst them, however, do not obey the Word of Light, and maintain an attitude contrary to it.

Likewise I was taught how one persuades them to participate in the designs of material beings, how one makes them know the Will of the Light, and how they obey it. And I saw also the Mediators (μεσίτης) who are found amongst them. I was surprised by the number of spirits of darkness who are found in the air... I learned to know the conventions (διαθήκη) that they elaborate amongst them and I was very astonished to learn that they are obedient to them. In this place there exists a constitution (διάθεσις), a good will (σπουδή), a commandment (ἐντολή) and a good sense allowing them to enjoy life in common... If you really want to believe me, I have seen him — the Devil — face to face. I made him appear before me through offerings. If you take my word to be the truth, I greeted him mouth to mouth. I spoke to him and he thought of me that I was one of the great ones before him. He called me "(a) gifted young man who is easy to instruct" and, also, "(a) little prince worthy of my society"... He said, "I will help you through them (all the powers — ἐξουσίαι) in your life (βίος)", for I was highly thought of by him... As I was going to leave, he cried out my name, "O very zealous Cyprian, be a strong and persevering man in all that you do"... And his appearance was similar to a flower of joy, adorned with precious stones; on his head he had a crown studded with these very stones, whose gleam was diffused throughout the whole place. And his clothing (στολή) radiated so strongly that the place where he sat moved..." (R.P. Festugière, O.P., "La révélation d'Hermes Trismégiste", vol. i, appendix 2, Paris, 1950, pp. 374-382)

Following this narrative of repentance, the account of Cyprian's conversion, properly said, begins. Well, here is one rich in experience and knowledge, for whom might be said (to use Paul Sédir's words):

"... after a certain meeting (with the Christian virgin Justina), all that the sages of Greece, Phrygia, Egypt and Chaldea had taught him became like the soft haze which rises at dusk after an over-warm day."

Furthermore, after having met face to face the Master himself of the wisdom of this world, he renounced the wisdom of this world to give himself up to the Wisdom of divine Love — which is folly in the eyes of the sages of this world...

In other words Cyprian, the bishop and martyr — with the magical wand, cup, sword and pentacle of Cyprian the mage in a bag — took it on his shoulders and set off, without defense against the dogs who attacked him, and as a ridiculous clown in the eyes of the world, en route towards... the martyrdom which awaited him. His Greek, Phrygian, Egyptian and Chaldean co-initiates must have said: "There goes the Dolt". Educated people and those of common sense of the society of his time would have said: "There goes the Fool". For in their eyes Cyprian had turned his back on the very principle of human culture and civilization — the intellect... the intellect whose ruling genius himself he had met face to face and who had called him: "(a) gifted young man who is easy to instruct". For the Spirit of "Knowledge for its own sake" spoke to him mouth to mouth and exhorted him to be "a strong and persevering man in all that he does".

Now, Cyprian proved to be stronger than the strength of arbitrary magic and more persevering than the perseverance required for knowledge for its own sake: he surpassed arbitrary will itself and devoted himself to a higher science — to divine science, i.e. to the

science of divine Love. It is the Tarot Arcanum "The Dolt" which is the decisive step that he made. Here lies its meaning and its actualizing magic.

The Arcanum "The Dolt" or "The Fool" teaches the "know-how" of passing from intellectuality, moved by the desire for knowledge, to the higher knowledge due to love. It is thus a matter of transition from the consciousness that theosophical literature calls "lesser manas" to the consciousness that it calls "greater manas" or "manas-budhi" — which corresponds to the transition from ego consciousness to the consciousness of the spiritual self (Geistselbst) in anthroposophical literature. In other words, the Tarot Arcanum "The Dolt" is related to the transformation of personal consciousness into cosmic consciousness, where the self (ego) is no longer the author of the act of consciousness but is its receiver — obedient to the law of poverty, obedience and chastity.

Now, the Arcanum "The Dolt" has a double meaning. Indeed, it can be understood in two different ways: as a model and as a warning at the same time. For on the one hand it teaches the freedom of transcendental consciousness elevated above the things of this world, and on the other hand it clearly presents a very impressive warning of the peril that this elevation comprises — lack of concern, inadequacy, irresponsibility and ridicule... in a word, madness.

The Arcanum "The Dolt" has in fact these two meanings. It teaches transcendental consciousness and it warns of its peril. It deals with two modes of the "sacrificium intellectus", the sacrifice of the intellect. For the intellect can be sacrificed in two different ways: it can be <u>placed in the service</u> of transcendental consciousness or it can be simply <u>abandoned</u>. Hermeticism chooses the first way of passing beyond intellectuality, while many a mystic — Christian or otherwise — has chosen the second way. However, let these two different attitudes not be confused with mystical ecstacism, pure and simple, on the one hand, and so-called "sober" mysticism, i.e. reasonable and prudent, on the other hand. St. John of the Cross was ravished in many bouts of ecstasy which went as far as levitation of the body; however, he was the author of books on mysticism whose clarity, profundity and sobriety of thought are hardly to be surpassed.

With St. John of the Cross, as he said himself, the intellect was silent in the face of the Divine Presence. It became absorbed by the Divine Presence (for the length of time determined by the latter) in order to become active again — <u>more</u> active, in fact, than before — after which it comes out again from being immersed in the absolute light whose clarity dazzles the intellect and appears to plunge it into darkness. But this being plunged into the darkness of absolute light does not remain without a profound effect for the intellect: the latter comes out of it endowed with new tendencies, imprinted from the Arcana above. Each ecstasy of St. John of the Cross was therefore an <u>initiation</u>, i.e. the direct imprint of divine, absolute truth not in the domain of conscious thought but rather in the domain of the "will underlying thinking", i.e. that which <u>produces</u> conscious thoughts. Thus, it is not a matter of the antinomy: ecstasy - progressive growth of consciousness. No, in passing beyond the intellect it is a matter of choosing between the decision to <u>replace</u> the intellect once and for all with the breath from above and the decision to <u>place</u> the intellect in the active service of this breath, whether it produces ecstatic raptures or not. Thus, a

whirling dervish who resorts to dance so as to exclude intelligence, or a Buddhist monk of the ZEN sect who lives in a mindless state of "meditation" (where he meditates on nothing but simply stays awake with an empty consciousness without falling asleep — in the expectation of a sudden illumination), this dervish and this Zen monk, I say, have made their choice: they have decided not to pass beyond intellectual consciousness, but rather to dispense with it.

It is different in the case of a Christian contemplative monk who meditates, for example, on the stages of the Lord's passion — and who wants to understand, feel and deepen himself in it to the point of identification with it — when he arrives at the state where his thought and imagination halt before the high pitch of the light. He passes beyond the intellect and the imagination, the activity of which halt after having attained their limit. But this halt is in reality only apparent; for just as a wheel turning with great speed appears to be immobile, so does the intellect and imagination of a soul in ecstasy appear to be immobile to ordinary consciousness — although they are (or, rather, because they are) overactive.

To pass beyond the intellect is therefore to render it overactive, while to bypass the the intellect is to reduce it to complete passivity. These are the two quite different ways of sacrificing the intellect ("sacrificium intellectus").

Now, I repeat, Hermeticism professes to the active surpassing of the intellect. This is why it comprises not only mystical experiences but also gnosis, magic and esoteric science. If it were not thus so, it would consist only of practical methods aspiring to illumination due to the suppression of intellectuality. The entire history of Hermeticism through the course of the ages is that of continuous inspiration from century to century, on the one hand, and the active response of human intelligence from century to century, on the other hand.

The XXIst Arcanum of the Tarot is therefore that of the Hermeticist's method of sacrificing the intellect to spirituality in such a way that it grows and develops instead of becoming enfeebled and atrophied. It is the arcanum of the "coniunctio oppositorum", the marriage of opposites — namely discursive intellectuality and illuminative spirituality; or, in other words, it is the alchemical work of the union of human wisdom, which is folly in the eyes of God, with divine wisdom, which is folly in the eyes of man, in such a way that the result is not a double folly but rather a single wisdom which understands both that which is above and that which is below.

In order to understand better what the issue is here, let us first of all look at the byways of the relationship between intellectuality and spirituality, between knowledge and revelation, on the historical plane.

Thus when St. Paul wrote:

> "... Jews demand signs (semeia) and Greeks seek wisdom (sophian), but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles — but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks: the power (dynamin) of God and the wisdom (sophian) of God." (I Corinthians i, 22-24)

he stated precisely the state of things in the relationship between pagan intellectuality and the Jewish prophetic spirituality of his time. Because the aspirations of the best of the pagans — the "philosophers" — all converged on the "Logos of the Cosmos" (i.e. the "cosmic intelligence"), whilst Jewish spiritual leaders lived in expectation — and

from expectation — of a Miracle transforming the world: the manifestation of the power of the Celestial King through his Annointed One, a terrestrial king. The former wanted to understand the world, while the latter awaited its magical transformation. Now, the preaching of Christ crucified clashed with the philosophers' fundamental idea that the entire world is the incarnation of the Logos, as well as with the fundamental thesis of Jewish prophetism that the Celestial King is seated above the world and intervenes in worldly events only by emitting lightning flashes of his power — through the prophets, through thaumaturgists, and through the Messiah — from his Throne above the world.

The crucified Christ therefore satisfied neither those who were desiring to understand the world — being only a particular phenomenon amongst other phenomena of the world — nor those who were awaiting the magical transformative manifestation of the power of God — the death on the Cross being a failure and not a triumph of divine power. Therefore a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Greeks. But St. Paul did not despair: Christ crucified, he said, revealed the power of God and the wisdom of God to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, i.e. the Cross of Christ can be understood only through the cross of revelation (miracle) and wisdom (immanent Logos). Thus St. Paul set a problem to be solved — or rather a task to be accomplished — by mankind. And mankind's spiritual history since then consists only of stages crossed in the accomplishment of the task of the union of revelation and knowledge, of divine wisdom and human wisdom. The stages are as follows:-

Initially there is pure and simple <u>opposition</u>, such as St. Paul stated it:

"If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God." (I Corinthians iii, 18-19)

Subsequently this opposition becomes <u>parallelism</u>, admitted and tolerated — a kind of "peaceful coexistence" of the spiritual and intellectual domains. The Gospel statement: "the sons of this age (tou aionos toutou) are wiser (phronimoteroi) in their own generation (eis ten genean ten heauton) than the sons of light (uious tou photos)" (Luke xvi, 8) formulates admirably the fundamental idea underlying the parallelism of spirituality and intellectuality. This parallelism manifests itself historically in the admitted and tolerated duality of "philosophy" and "theology".

Later, the parallelism was gradually replaced by <u>cooperation</u> between spirituality and intellectuality. The "wisdom of the Greeks" — above all the thoughts of Plato and those of Aristotle — which at the time of St. Paul saw only "folly in the preaching of Christ crucified" became an ally of revelation. First of all the Greek fathers (above all CLEMENT of ALEXANDRIA and ORIGEN), and also St. AUGUSTINE, did not hesitate to resort to the help of Platonic thought, and then it was St. Albertus MAGNUS and St. THOMAS AQUINAS who opened the way for the entrance of Aristotelian thought, also, in the domain of revealed truths.

It is above all the Dominicans to whom mankind's spiritual history owes the crossing of the stage in the gradual bringing together of spirituality and intellectuality which is the phenomenon called "scholasticism". Scholasticism signifies a great human endeavor, sustained through the course of centuries, aiming at an as complete as possible cooperation between spirituality and

intellectuality.

While endeavoring to render revelation intelligible, i.e. to understand it through intelligence, scholasticism made use of the latter only as an instrument for backing up revelation by means of argumentative or philosophical thought. The fundamental thesis of scholasticism was that philosophy is the servant of theology (philosophia ancilla theologiae). Intelligence certainly cooperated, but it played only a subordinate role. Thus, scholasticism did not succeed in achieving the alchemical work of the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality — the work of the "marriage of the Sun and Moon" — the result of which is a third principle called the "philosopher's stone" in alchemy.

The "philosopher's stone" of spiritual alchemy is described in the Emerald Table of Hermes Trismegistus as follows:

> "The father thereof is the sun, the mother the moon, the wind carried it in its womb; the earth is the nurse thereof; it is the father of all works of wonder (Thelema) throughout the whole world; the power thereof is perfect, if it be cast on to earth.
> It will separate the element of earth from that of fire, the subtle from the gross, gently and with great sagacity. It doth ascend from earth to heaven and again it doth descend to earth, and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior."

This means to say that the process of induction (which "ascends from earth to heaven") and that of deduction (which "descends to earth"), the process of prayer (which ascends from earth to heaven) and that of revelation (which descends to earth) — i.e. human endeavor and the action of grace from above — unite and become a complete circle which contracts and concentrates to become a point where the ascent and descent are simultaneous and coincide. And this point is the "philosopher's stone" — the principle of the identity of the human and the divine, of humanism and prophetism, of intelligence and revelation, of intellectuality and spirituality. It is the solution of the problem posed by St. Paul, or rather the accomplishment of the task given by him, when he wrote of the Cross being folly to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews, but which to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, is the power of God and the wisdom of God (I Cor. i,22-25).

Now, the historical and evolutionary mission of Hermeticism is to advance the progress of the alchemical work engaged in developing the "philosopher's stone" or the union of spirituality and intellectuality. It is called to be the crest of the wave of contemporary human effort aspiring to the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality. This effort and aspiration is larger than the group of Hermeticists, properly said, who are dispersed in the world. There are probably more people who are not avowed Hermeticists and who are engaged in the endeavor aiming at the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality than there are Hermeticists, properly said. Neither Vladimir SOLOVIEV, nor Nicholas BERDYAEV, nor Pierre TEILHARD de Chardin, nor Carl Gustav JUNG, for example, were declared Hermeticists, but how much they have contributed to the progress of the work in question! Christian existentialism (Berdyaev), Christian gnosis (Soloviev), Christian evolutionism (Teilhard de Chardin), and depth psychology of revelation (Jung) are, in fact, as many inestimable contributions to the cause of the union of spirituality and

intellectuality. Although they did not make Hermeticism their calling, they served its cause and were inspired from the same sources from which Hermeticism is inspired. Hermeticism has, therefore, more than a few allies and collaborators beyond the ranks of its adherents. The Spirit blows where it will, but the task of the Hermetic Tradition is to maintain — without pretension to a monopoly, God forbid! — the ancient ideal of the "Thelema of the whole world which ascends from earth to heaven and descends to earth, and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior". Its task is that of guardian of the great spiritual work.

To be a guardian signifies two things: firstly, the study of and practical application of the heritage of the past, and secondly continuous creative effort aiming at the advancement of the work. For the tradition lives only when it is deepened, elevated and increased in size. Conservation alone does not suffice at all. It is only a corpse which lends itself to conservation by means of mummification.

The great spiritual work — seen always on the historical plane — takes place under simultaneous action stemming from two contrasting sources: from above and from below, i.e. under the action of continuous revelation and that of the effort of human consciousness. In other words, it is the product of the collaboration of revelation and humanism, or of Avatars and Buddhas — to say it in terms of the Indo-Tibetan spiritual tradition. This latter awaits both a new wave of revelation, the culminating point of which will be the Kalki-Avatar, and the manifestation of a new Buddha — the Maitreya Buddha. At the same time esoteric Islam (batin) — Shi'ism and Sufism — awaits the coming (parousia) of the Twelfth Imam "who, at the end of our Era, will bring the full revelation of the esotericism of all divine Revelations" (Henri CORBIN, "Histoire de la philosophie islamique", Paris, 1964, p.21), and believing Jews await the coming of the Messiah. We need hardly mention, also, the widespread expectation of the second coming of Christ.

Thus, there is a climate of expectation in the world — expectation sustained, contemplated and intensified through the course of the centuries. Without being nourished and directed from above, this energy of human expectation alone would have exhausted itself long ago. But it is not exhausted; rather, on the contrary, it is growing. This is because it aspires to a reality and not an illusion. And this reality is the historical accomplishment of the great work of uniting spirituality and intellectuality, revelationism and humanism, on the vast scale of the whole of mankind.

Seen on the level of the history of the whole of mankind, this work presents itself as follows:

We mentioned above the oriental notions of Avatars and Imams, on the one hand, and that of Buddhas, on the other hand. Avatars and Imams represent personalities who are culminating points of the revelation from above, while Buddhas (Gautama Buddha being only one in a series of Buddhas) represent the culminating points of certain epochs of human history — not of revelation from above, but rather of the awakening of human consciousness. The word "buddha" signifies "awakened", while that of "avatara" signifies "descent" — "a descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in the human form and nature, (this is) the eternal Avatar" (Sri AUROBINDO Ghose, "Essays on the Gita", Madras, 1922, p.190). Therefore, if Avatars are descents of the divine, Buddhas are ascents of the human — they are

culminating points of stages of humanism in the process of evolution. The difference between the "revelatory ones" (Avatars and Imams) and the "awakened ones" (Buddhas) is analogous to that between "saints" and "righteous men" in the Judeo-Christian world. Here "saints" correspond to Avatars in that they represent the revelation of divine grace through them and in them, and "righteous men" correspond to Buddhas in that they bring to evidence the fruits of human endeavor.

Thus Job was not a saint, but a righteous man — one of those righteous men who "maintain the world" through their merits. Righteous men show how great the value is of human nature when its very essence is awakened and revealed. Righteous men are the true humanists — the flowers of pure humanism. They bear witness to the fact that the essence of human nature is in the image and likeness of God. This was the witness borne by Job and it was also the witness borne by Socrates. The German philosopher Immanuel KANT bore witness also, by declaring loudly that, however bereft the human soul might be of illuminating grace from above and revelation from above, it bears in itself the categorical imperative — immanent moral law (called "dharma" by the Sages of India) — which makes it act and think as if it were eternal, immortal and aspiring to infinite perfection.... Thus Kant bore witness to the fundamental nobility of human nature — and this was his contribution to faith in man, whatever his limitations, and even errors, in the metaphysical domain may be. For just as there are two loves — love of God and love of neighbor — which are inseparable, so there are two faiths which are also inseparable — faith in God and faith in man. Saints and martyrs bear witness to God and righteous men bear witness to man, as being the image and likeness of God. The former restore and strengthen faith in God and the latter restore and strengthen faith in man. And it is faith in Jesus Christ, in the God-Man, which unites Faith in God and that in man, just as love for Jesus Christ unites love of God and love of neighbor. In Jesus Christ we have the perfect union of divine Revelation and the most pure humanism. Which means to say that not only all Avatars but also all Buddhas of the past and of the future are summarized in Jesus Christ — being the Logos made flesh, and his Humanity having realized the most complete awakening of all that which is of divine essence in human nature. For Jesus Christ is the revelation that God is love, and he bears witness that the essence of human nature is love. And can one conceive of, can one imagine, anything more divine than love and anything more human than love? For this reason all Avatars (including all prophets and all Imams) and all Buddhas (including all sages, all initiates and all Bodhisattvas) were, are, and will be only degrees and aspects of the divine revelation and the human awakening realized in Jesus Christ.

This truth, evident for everyone whose head and heart are united in thought (i.e. for the one who uses moral logic), is nevertheless very difficult for those making use of formal logic — in the domain of mankind's history or in the domain of philosophy — to understand and accept.

Now, the following words of Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita relate to the doctrine of avatars:

> "Many births of yours and mine, O Arjuna, have taken place... Though I am unborn (having no birth), though I am imperishable, though I am master of the elements, yet out of my maya (power of illusion) I take birth, resting on (material) Nature.

Whensoever, O Bharata, virtue (adharmasya, the law of righteousness) languishes and sin predominates, I create myself (I take birth). I take birth age after age, for the liberation of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of piety (true religion)." (Bhagavad-Gita iv, 5-8; trsl. M.N. Dutt, Bhishma Parva xxviii, 5-8 in "The Mahabharata" vi, Calcutta, 1897, p.37)

In commenting on this, Sri AUROBINDO says:

"The Avatar comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, in order that the human nature may, by molding its principle, thought, feeling, action, being on the lines of that Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, transfigure itself into the divine. The law, the Dharma which the Avatar establishes is given for that purpose chiefly; the Christ, Krishna, Buddha stands in its center as the gate, he makes through himself the way men shall follow. That is why each Incarnation (Avatar) holds before men his own example and declares of himself that he is the way and the gate; he declares too the oneness of his humanity with the divine being, declares that the Son of Man and the Father above from whom he has descended are one, that Krishna in the human body... and the supreme Lord and Friend of all creatures are but two revelations of the same divine Purushottama, revealed there in his own being, revealed here in the type of humanity." (Sri AUROBINDO Ghose, "Essays on the Gita", Madras, 1922, pp.190-191)

Nothing could be clearer and more convincing! Avatars are therefore periodic incarnations of the Divine; they incarnate periodically with a view to reestablishing the law, just like prophets, who arise to the same end, and they are, each time, doors and ways — Sons of God and Sons of Man who are one with their Father in Heaven. And Sri Aurobindo continues: "Nor does it matter essentially in what form and name or putting forward what aspect of the Divine he (the Avatar) comes; for in all ways, varying with their nature, men are following the path set to them by the Divine which will in the end lead them to Him and the aspect of Him which suits their nature is that which they can best follow when He comes to lead them; in whatever way men accept, love and take joy in God, in that way God accepts, loves and takes joy in man." (Sri Aurobindo Ghose, "Essays on the Gita", Madras, 1922, p.226)

All this appears as the breath of pure reason — the most resolute ecumenism and universal tolerance! But is not this tolerance, this ecumenism and this reasonability of the doctrine of avatars, such as it is professed by Sri Aurobindo, in principle identical with the reasonability, ecumenism and tolerance manifested by the leaders of the Roman empire who conceived of the idea of a temple for all the gods, i.e. the Pantheon? The Pantheon with a place of honor given to Jesus Christ alongside Jupiter, Osiris, Mithras and Dionysius? For all these gods have this in common, that they are immortal and superior to man. And is not Christ immortal, since he resurrected from the dead, and is he not superior to man, as his miracles prove? Therefore he belongs to the category of gods and has the right to be admitted to their ranks at the Pantheon.

Theoretically there are ten avatars of Vishnu in Hinduism (e.g. Matsyavatara, Varahavatara, Narasimhavatara, Vamanavatara), but Rama and Krishna are the most popular and most celebrated amongst them. With respect to the avatar to come, Kalkin

or Kalki, he is spoken of in the Kalki-Purana as the avatar who will mark the end of the age of iron; he will be clothed in the form of a giant, with the head of a horse — a symbol which appeals to our faculty of meditative deepening. Sri Aurobindo mentions — and this on many occasions — only Christ, Krishna and Buddha.

Nevertheless Buddha (whom, it is true, Hinduism has included in its pantheon, just as Islam sees in Jesus Christ one of the prophets, the last of whom was Mohammed) does not in any way correspond to the fundamental characteristic of Avatars given by Sri Aurobindo, namely:

> "... each Incarnation (Avatar) holds before men his own example and declares of himself that he is the way and the gate; he declares too the oneness of his humanity with the divine being... that the Son of Man and the Father above from whom he has descended are one..." (Sri Aurobindo Ghose, "Essays on the Gita", Madras, 1922, p.191)

It is an incontestable fact that Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha, never declared the identity of his human being with divine being (not to mention that he never declared himself to be one with the Father in heaven). The Dighanikaya, a long collection of the Buddha's discourses in Pali, contradicts it on each page and uses a multitude of arguments and facts to the sole end of persuading the reader (or listener to the Buddha's discourses) that Buddha was the awakened man, i.e. he became completely conscious of the common and ordinary human experience on earth — that of birth, sickness, old age and death — and drew from it practical and moral conclusions which are summarized in his eightfold path. The point shown by the Dighanikaya is that it is not the extraordinary experience of a mystic or gnostic revelation which made the prince of Kapilavastu a Buddha, but rather that he awoke to a new understanding of ordinary human experience — of the human condition as such. It was a man — and not a messenger from heaven — who awoke from the sleep of passive acceptance, habit, the stupefying influence of transitory desires, and the hypnotic force of the totality of human conventions.

The Buddha's teaching is that of a human spirit who took account, in a state of complete lucidity, of the human condition in general and of the practical and moral consequences to be drawn from it. It is an analysis of the reality of human life, and an establishment of the unique consequences which result necessarily from this analysis, by a human spirit five centuries before Jesus Christ, who was placed beyond the Jewish and Iranian prophetic tradition. The Buddha's teaching is therefore humanism pure and simple, which has nothing to do with the revelation from above by prophets and avatars.

It is necessary, therefore, to eliminate Buddha from the three Avatars mentioned by Sri Aurobindo — "Christ, Krishna, Buddha".

Concerning Jesus Christ, he did not come solely "for the liberation of the good and the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of the throne of Justice" (Bhagavad-Gita iv,8), but above all to vanquish evil and death, for the establishment of the throne of Love. Jesus Christ was not only a divine birth but also — and above all — the divine death, i.e. resurrection — which is not the mission of any Avatar, of the past or yet to come. The work

of Jesus Christ differs from that of Avatars in that it signifies the expiatory sacrifice for completely fallen mankind. This means to say that mankind, who before Jesus Christ had only the choice between renunciation and affirmation of the world of birth and death, is put in the position, since the mystery of Calvary, of transforming it — the Christian ideal being "a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation xxi,1). The mission of an Avatar, however, is the "liberation of the good" in this fallen world, without even attempting to transform it. It is a matter in the work of Jesus Christ of universal salvation — the work of divine Magic and divine Alchemy, that of the transformation of the fallen world — and not only of the liberation of the good. The work of Jesus Christ is the divine magical operation of love aiming at universal salvation through the transformation of mankind and of nature.

As well as Buddha, therefore, it is necessary to eliminate Jesus Christ, also, from the abridged list of Avatars given by Sri Aurobindo. Thus, only Krishna remains who is, in addition to Rama, the Avatar par excellence of Hinduism.

Although we refute Sri Aurobindo's classification of Buddha and Jesus Christ in the category of Avatars, we should do justice to this Indian sage: his idea of Jesus Christ is infinitely more elevated and nearer to the truth than that of self-styled Christian theologians of the so-called "liberal" Protestant school who regard Jesus Christ as a simple carpenter from Nazareth, who taught and lived the moral ideal of love of God and neighbor. Even every muezzin of Cairo or Baghdad has a notion of Jesus Christ that is more just than that of these theologians, since the former regard him as a prophet inspired by God. With respect to Sri Aurobindo, he regards Jesus Christ as a divine incarnation and makes it understood — by always placing Jesus Christ at the head of the other Avatars ("Christ, Krishna, Buddha") — that he, personally, considers him as a light of the first magnitude in the heaven of divine Avatars!

But let us now return to the Arcanum of the alchemical work of the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality, as seen on the historical plane.

After Jesus Christ — the God-Man, who was the complete unity not only of spirituality and intellectuality, but also of divine will and human will, and even of divine essence and human essence — the work of the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality can be nothing other than the germination of the Christic seed in human nature and consciousness. In other words, it is a matter of the progress of the Christianization of mankind, not only in the sense of a growing number of baptized people, but above all in the sense of a qualitative transformation of human nature and consciousness. This latter will work in conformity with the law: general aspiration and longing; culminating point of success in an individuality; general diffusion spread out over a number of generations, i.e. the climate of general expectation will lead to the particular realization which will subsequently become general. This is why Buddhists await the coming of the Maitreya Buddha and Hindus that of the Kalki-Avatar. They await him having in view a step forward in mankind's evolution which will be crossed as a consequence of the manifestation of the new Buddha and the new Avatar. And this step forward will be nothing other than the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality.

This expectation is, moreover, not restricted to the Orient: theosophists made a considerable contribution to it by launching a movement of international scope aiming at preparing minds for the coming — supposedly at hand — of the new teacher. To this end they

founded the Order of the Star of the East which numbered about 250,000 members, and which organized congresses, conferences and rallies all over the place, as well as publishing hundreds of books and brochures. While spreading the idea of the imminent coming of a new teacher for mankind, the Order of the Star of the East was, alas, too fixed on a particular personality — chosen not by Heaven, but rather by the leaders of the Theosophical Society — who was extolled in advance so as to build up his prestige, which in the last analysis displeased this person, who disbanded the Order.

It was more discreetly, and without putting a particular person in the limelight as candidate, that Doctor Rudolf STEINER, founder of the Anthroposophical Society, predicted the manifestation — again in the first half of the twentieth century — not of the new Maitreya Buddha or Kalki Avatar, but rather of the bodhisattva, i.e. the individuality in the process of becoming the next Buddha, whose field of activity he hoped the Anthroposophical Society would serve. A new disappointment! This time the disappointment was due not to an error with regard to the awaited individuality, nor even with regard to the time of the beginning of his activity, but rather to an overestimation of the Anthroposophical Society on the part of its founder: thus nothing became of it.

Be that as it may, the idea and the expectation of the coming of the new Buddha and new Avatar lives at present both in the western world and in the orient. There is much confusion concerning this idea, above all among theosophists, but there are also those who see clearly here. Rudolf Steiner, for example, saw very clearly : of all that has been written and said in public, the most correct is what was said by Rudolf Steiner. He was on the right track, at least.

Now, in following the same track — that leading to the culminating point of the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality — we arrive at the following synopsis:

Since it is a question of the work of the fusion of revelation and knowledge, of spirituality and intellectuality, it is a matter throughout of the fusion of the Avatar principle and the Buddha principle. In other words, the Kalki-Avatar awaited by the Hindus and the Maitreya Buddha awaited by the Buddhists will manifest <u>in a single personality</u>. On the historical plane the Maitreya Buddha and the Kalki-Avatar will be one.

This means to say that the awaited Avatar "with the body of a giant and the head of a horse" and the expected Buddha who will be the "bringer of the good" will be one and the same personality. And this personality will signify the complete union of the most elevated humanism — the principle of the Buddhas — and the highest revelation — the principle of the Avatars — of a kind that both the spiritual world and the human world will speak and act simultaneously and hand-in-hand through him. In other words, the Buddha-Avatar to come <u>will not only speak of the good, but he will speak t h e g o o d</u>; he will not only teach the way of salvation, but he will advance the course of this way; he will not be solely a witness of the divine and spiritual world, but he will make human beings into authentic witnesses of this world; he will not simply explain the profound meaning of Revelation, but he will bring human beings themselves to attain to the illuminating experience of Revelation, of a kind that it will not be he who will win authority, but rather He who is "the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world" — Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The mission of the Buddha-Avatar to come will

therefore not be the foundation of a new religion, but rather that of bringing human beings to first hand experience of the source itself of all revelation ever received from above by mankind, as also of all essential truth ever conceived of by mankind. It will not be novelty to which he will aspire, but rather the conscious certainty of eternal truth.

The Buddha-Avatar Maitreya-Kalkin will represent the fusion of <u>prayer</u> and <u>meditation</u>, these two forms of spiritual activity being the motivating forces of spiritual Religion and spiritual Humanism. The apparent incompatibility of the state of consciousness represented by statues of the master of meditation, Gautama Buddha, plunged in meditation in the asana posture, and that of St. Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata while kneeling in prayer — this apparent incompatibility, I say — will be surmounted by the Buddha-Avatar to come. The fire of prayer will unite with the limpid water of the peace of meditation; the alchemical marriage of the Sun and Moon, of fire and water, will take place in him.

The union of the principles of prayer and meditation which the future Buddha-Avatar will represent will be, in fact, the crowning of a long series of efforts aiming at this end through the course of the centuries — the result of a long preparation through the course of mankind's spiritual history. For not only was prayer introduced into the strictly meditative Indo-Tibetan Mahayana school of Buddhism — under the form of Lamaism — and into Hinduism under the form of Bhakti-Yoga, but also meditation was introduced to the West in the guise of complementing and helping the life of prayer in the spiritual practice of the great religious orders. St. Bonaventura, for example, introduced it into the Franciscan Order, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross introduced it into the Carmelite Order, and St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, was a master not only of prayer but also of meditation. One could say that this latter to a large extent prefigured the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality, of prayer and meditation, which is the mission of the future Buddha-Avatar. The <u>calm warmth</u> of complete certainty, due to the cooperation of human effort and revelation from above, which St. Ignatius possessed and which his disciples (of his spiritual exercises) attained — where meditation and prayer are united — make an impressive prefiguring of the Buddha-Avatar to come.

I am well aware that St. Ignatius does not enjoy unreserved admiration either among Protestants or among Catholics themselves, and that neither among the former nor among the latter are there many who have much sympathy for him. At best he has gained the cold respect of the more perceptive intellectuals of the two confessions. But with regard to popularity or unpopularity there is good reason to say that it will not be popularity or general acclaim which will characterize the work of the Buddha-Avatar to come, but rather the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality, no matter whether this pleases or not. Without doubt there will be more opposition than appreciation, for neither the partisans of pure faith nor those of pure knowledge will hesitate to object that it is a matter of dangerously effacing the line of demarcation between faith and science. Look at the controversy of our time surrounding the work of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin!

With respect to St. Ignatius of Loyola, it is not only his heroic effort to unite spirituality

and intellectuality which interests us — we who are engaged in meditating on the Tarot Arcanum "The Dolt" — but also, and above all, the fact that St. Ignatius began as a Fool in Spirit and that he succeeded in attaining to the wisdom of perfect equilibrium between the world of mystical revelations and the world of human tasks and actions. He learned and openly lived the lesson of Arcanum XXI of the Tarot!

Indeed, was it not as a Fool in Spirit (acting in the spirit of the Dolt of our Arcanum) when he "left on a bank (close to the place of embarkation at Barcelona) five or six pieces of silver obtained by begging in Barcelona, putting all his confidence, all his hope and all his assurance in God alone" before embarking on board a ship destined for Italy? (cf. "Monumenta historica Societatis Jesu, Scripta de Sancto Ignatio", vol. ii, Madrid, 1904). And compare the Ignatius of the time of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land with the Ignatius in Rome as the head of the Order, directing the very different activities at first of sixty, then of four hundred, and lastly of three thousand spiritual sons! And the step made by him — although contrary in direction to that made by Cyprian the mage — is again the putting into practice of the Tarot Arcanum "The Dolt". For this Arcanum is that of the "hygienic experience", so to say, of man placed as an intermediary between two worlds — the divine world and the human world. It is the Arcanum of crossing the threshold of these two worlds in two directions — from below above (which was the case with Cyprian) and to return (which was, in fact, the case with St. Ignatius). It is therefore the Arcanum of the transformation of the mental turmoil — the schizophrenia of two consciousnesses not in harmony with one another — into wisdom.

We have spoken here of the Buddha-Avatar to come, because he will be the guide in the transformation of potential schizophrenic madness into the wisdom of the harmony of the two worlds and of their experience. He will be the example and living model of realization of the Arcanum which occupies us. For this reason he is represented as a Buddha in canonical Buddhist art not in a meditation posture with crossed legs, but rather seated as a European — this latter posture symbolizing the synthesis of the principle of prayer and that of meditation. And for this reason, also, he is imagined in Indian "mythology" (as an Avatar) as a giant with the head of a horse, i.e. as a being with the human will of a giant and, at the same time, intellectuality placed completely in the service of revelation from above — the horse being the obedient servant of its rider. Thus, he represents in prodigious measure three activities of the human will: seeking, knocking and asking — conforming to the saying of the Master of all masters: Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you — and, at the same time, he will not put forward personal opinions or reasonable hypotheses; for his intellectuality — his "horse's head" — will be moved solely by revelation from above. Like the horse, it will be directed by the rider. Nothing arbitrary will issue forth.

This is the Arcanum at work on the historical plane. Concerning its application in the domain of the individual's inner life, it is analogous to the work of spiritual alchemy which operates on the historical plane. This means to say that the individual soul begins initially with the experience of the separation and opposition of the spiritual and intellectual elements within it, then advances

to — or resigns itself to — parallelism, i.e. a kind of "peaceful coexistence" of these two elements within it. Subsequently it arrives at cooperation between spirituality and intellectuality which, proving to be fruitful, eventually becomes the complete fusion of these two elements in a third element — the "philosopher's stone" of the spiritual alchemy of Hermeticism. The beginning of this final stage is announced by the fact that logic becomes transformed from formal logic (i.e. general and abstract logic) — passing through the intermediary stage of "organic logic" — into moral logic (i.e. material and essential logic). In order to illustrate the transformation of formal logic into organic logic and this latter into moral logic, let us take the example of the axiom of formal logic: "the part is less than the whole". It is an axiom because the notion itself of "part" signifies nothing other than a quantity less than that of the whole. This is evident, when it is a matter of quantities. But this axiom is no longer absolutely valid with respect to the functions of a living organism. Here the part — and even a small part — can be as essential as the whole organism. The heart, for example, is only a small part of the body, but remove it from the body and the whole organism will cease to exist as a living organism. For the domain of organic functions it is therefore necessary to modify our axiom in the sense that "the part can be equal to the whole". But if we proceed from the organic world to the world of values, the moral world, we are obliged to modify the axiom still further. Here it should be said that "the part can be greater than the whole", because Caiaphas' reasoning that "it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation should not perish" is right only with regard to the domain of quantities, but is false with regard to the domain of moral values. For this "one man" that he proposed to sacrifice in order to save the people was the very reason for the existence of this people: the Messiah. Moreover, history has shown that the measure taken on Caiaphas' counsel aiming at preventing military intervention by the Romans was in vain: the Romans came all the same in 70 A.D., destroying Jerusalem and the Temple of Jerusalem after having massacred its inhabitants, which was exactly what Caiaphas wanted to avoid....

Moral logic, in contrast to formal logic and organic logic, operates with values instead of notions of grammar, mathematics, or biological functions. Thus, if formal logic can go only so far towards the idea of God as to postulate the necessity of admitting a beginning in the chain of cause and effect — postulating a First Cause ("primus motor") — and if organic logic, that of functions, cannot come further than postulating in the order existing in the world the existence of God as the ordering principle — the "law of laws" of the world — moral logic comes to the postulate that God is the "value of values", that He is L o v e.

And, since hate and indifference are not creative, it is love which is the source, cause and motivation of the creation of the world. One does not create what one detests and one does not proceed to the creative act being moved by indifference, i.e. by lack of interest. God is, therefore, creative love — the creative Father of the visible and invisible world. Father, that is to say, he who gives being to created beings. And since being is his gift to beings, and not a temporary loan, he does not take back his gift — once given; beings created by the Father are therefore immortal. Immortality is thus a necessary conclusion of moral logic concerning the idea that God is Love.

And so on — until all the essential articles of Faith are established from the moral

postulates necessary to moral logic. What are initially postulates of moral logic are confirmed, amplified and deepened through spiritual experience which will not hesitate to come to the aid of thought, when head and heart are equally engaged. Because moral logic is the language of the spiritual world, and to make use of moral logic is to begin a dialogue with the spiritual world. For the latter does not remain mute and indifferent when addressed in its own language.

Moral logic, as we have stated, is the logic of head and heart united. It is therefore that which unites meditation and prayer.

Prayer — which asks, thanks, worships and blesses — is the radiation, the breath and the warmth of the awakened heart: expressed in formulas of the articulated word, in the wordless inner sighing of the soul and, lastly, in the silence, both outward and inward, of the breathing of the soul immersed in the element of divine respiration and breathing in unison with it. Prayer has, therefore, different aspects: a "magical" aspect, i.e. prayer in formulas; a "gnostic" aspect, when it becomes inexpressible inner sighing; and, lastly, a "mystical" aspect, when it becomes the silence of union with the Divine. Thus, it is never in vain and without effect. Even a prayer-formula pronounced rapidly in a detached and impersonal manner has a magical effect, because the sum-total of ardor put into this formula in the past — by believers, saints and angels — is evoked solely through the fact of pronouncing the prayer-formula. Every prayer-formula consecrated by use has a magical virtue, since it is collective: the voices of all those who have ever prayed it are evoked by it and join the voice of he who pronounces it with serious intention. This applies above all to the formulas of liturgical prayer. Each phrase of the Roman Catholic Mass or Greek Orthodox Liturgy, for example, is a formula of divine Sacred Magic. There is nothing astonishing about this, since the Mass and the Liturgy consist only of the prayers of prophets, saints and Jesus Christ himself. But what is truly astonishing is that there are — and always have been — esotericists (such as Fabre d'Olivet, for example) who improvise cults, prayer-formulas, new "mantrams", etc., as if something is gained through novelty! Perhaps they believe that the formulas taken from Holy Scripture or given by the saints are used up through usage and have lost their virtue? This would be a radical misunderstanding. Because usage does not at all deplete a prayer-formula, but rather, on the contrary, it adds to its virtue. For this reason it is also deplorable that certain Protestant churches have the custom of the minister or preacher improvising prayers in their divine service — probably believing that it is the personal which is the more effective and not the common and collective tradition.

One should know, dear Unknown Friend, that one never prays alone, i.e. that there are always others — above, or in the past on earth — who pray with you in the same sense, in the same spirit and even in the same words. In praying, you always represent a visible or invisible community together with you. If you pray for healing, you represent all the sick and all healers, and the community of sick people and healers then prays with you. For this reason the Lord's prayer is not addressed to "my Father in heaven", but rather to "our Father in heaven", and asks the Father to give us this day our daily bread, that he forgive us our trespasses, that he leads us not into temptation and that he delivers us from Evil. Thus, whatever the particular intention of the one who prays the Lord's prayer may be, it is in the name of the whole of mankind that he prays.

With respect to the prayer which is an inner, inexpressible sighing — which we have named

"gnostic" — the difference from "magical" prayer in formulas is a transformation of the psycho-physical breathing in prayer. Thus it can be made permanent — day and night, awake and asleep, without interruption, as long as respiration lasts. This type of prayer (which is practiced above all in the Christian Orient) has a virtue than is more than magical: it transforms man into a mirror of the spiritual and divine world. For this reason we have named it "gnostic" — gnostic experience being the reflection of the mystical experience.

Concerning mystical prayer properly said, i.e. the state of the humal soul united with the Divine, where it no longer has even its own breathing, but breathes in and through the breath of divine respiration alone, it is the profound silence of all soul faculties — intelligence, imagination, memory and will — which, for example, St. John of the Cross describes and explains in his works. It is the consummation of love between the soul and God.

Meditation, i.e. the gradual deepening of thought, also has its stages, which comprise pure and simple concentration on a subject, understanding the subject within the totality of relationships that it has with reality and, lastly, intuitive penetration into the very essence of the subject. Just as prayer leads to mystical union of the soul with the Divine, so does meditation lead to grasping a direct knowledge of eternal and immutable principles. René Guénon named this experience of the union of the particular intellect with the universal Intellect (the Nous of PLOTINUS and the Stoics) — as well as the doctrines which result from it — "metaphysical". He summarized his leading ideas on this "metaphysics" in a conference on "oriental metaphysics" which he gave at the Sorbonne in 1925 — which thesis one finds reproduced on pages 13 and 14 of Paul SÉDIR's book "Histoire et doctrine des rose-croix" (Paris, 1964):

> "Metaphysics is knowledge par excellence. It is not natural knowledge, either with respect to its object or with respect to the faculties by which it is obtained. More particularly, it has nothing to do with the scientific and rational domain. It is not a matter of operating with abstractions but of taking knowledge directly from eternal and immutable principles.
>
> Metaphysics is not human knowledge. Thus, it is not in so far as he is man that man can attain it; it is the grasping in effective consciousness of supra-individual states. The very principle of metaphysical realization is identification through knowledge — according to Aristotle's axiom: a being is all that he knows.
>
> The most important means is concentration. Realization consists initially in the unlimited development of all possibilities contained virtually in the individual, then in finally going beyond the world of forms to a degree of universality which is that of pure being.
>
> The final aim of metaphysical realization is the absolutely unconditioned state, free from all limitation. The liberated being is then truly in possession of the fullness of his possibilities. This is union with the supreme Principle.
>
> True metaphysics cannot be determined in time; it is eternal. It is an order of knowledge reserved for an élite."

An élite, let us add with SÉDIR, which is composed of beings who are only intelligence. "And then (writes Sédir in the above-mentioned book), all existing manifestations of the Absolute are not there for the sake of being ignored; to abandon them because they encumber us, as the yogi (sic) or the arhat does, is not noble or Christian..." (op. cit. page 14)

Metaphysics as "direct knowledge of eternal and immutable principles" and as the realization of

"finally going beyond the world of forms to a degree of universality which is that of pure being" is only one of the applications of meditation, and is by no means the only one. There are still others.

Since Orientals aspire to deliverance by taking refuge in the abstract point of origin of all spatial forms, they therefore employ meditation to this end. However, Jewish esotericists — the Cabbalists — want to arrive at the worship and love of God that is most worthy of Him. This is why their meditative efforts aim at a deepening of the divine mysteries which are revealed in Scripture and in the Creation. The Zohar is an inexhaustible source of teaching concerning this school of meditation and its fruits.

Christian meditation, also, pursues the aim of deepening the two divine revelations: holy Scripture and the Creation, but it does so above all with a view to awakening a more complete consciousness and appreciation of Jesus Christ's work of Redemption. For this reason it culminates in the contemplation of the seven stages of the Passion: the washing of the feet, the scourging, the crowning with the crown of thorns, the way of the cross, the crucifixion, the laying in the tomb, and the resurrection.

The meditation of Christian Hermeticism — whose aim is to understand and advance the work of the alchemical transformation of the spirit, the soul, and matter, from the state of primordial purity before the Fall, to the state after the Fall, and from the latter to that of the reintegration of Salvation (the fulfillment of Salvation) — proceeds, for example, from the seven "days" of the Creation according to Genesis to the seven stages of the Fall, then to the seven miracles of St. John's Gospel, and then to the seven sayings of Jesus concerning himself (I am the resurrection and the life; I am the light of the world; I am the good shepherd; I am the bread of life; I am the door; I am the way, the truth and the life; I am the true vine), in order to conclude with the seven "words" of Jesus Christ crucified and the seven stages of the Passion indicated above.

Meditation can thus serve as a means to attain diverse ends, but whatever its aim it is always the means to realization of a more and more intense awakening of the whole consciousness (and not only of intelligence) with respect to particular facts, ideas, ideals and, lastly, the reality of the human terrestrial and spiritual condition in general. It is also the means of awakening consciousness with respect to revelations from above. To meditate is to deepen; it is to go to the heart of things.

For this reason the practice of meditation entails the transformation of formal logic into organic logic and this latter into m o r a l logic. The latter, in its turn is developed by going beyond comprehension, by contemplation of things which surpass understanding: mysteries which — not being unknowable — allow of an infinite knowledge that one can understand and know ever more deeply, without end. Having attained this contemplation of things surpassing actual understanding, meditation becomes p r a y e r — just as prayer which attains the state of contemplation without words becomes m e d i t a t i o n. And it is this "alchemical marriage" of prayer and meditation — of the sun and moon of the soul's inner heaven — which takes place in the soul of the human being who is in the process of realizing the Arcanum "The Dolt" — the Arcanum of the union of the revelation from above and human wisdom, while avoiding madness — the Arcanum of the formation of the "philosopher's stone", where the twofold certainty of revelation from above and human knowledge is concentrated.

The foregoing are some glimpses that arise in the soul of one who meditates on the Card of the Arcanum "The Dolt", representing a man walking, in the clothes of a buffoon, holding a bag and supporting himself with a staff, which he does not use to chase away the dog attacking him.

Other — and more profound — glimpses are kept in reserve for those who will deepen their meditation on this Arcanum further than is indicated here. I greet them and hope that

they may be able to make new light issue forth from their meditation on the Arcanum whose esoteric name is L O V E ! -

End of the XXIst Meditation.

Meditation on the XXIIth Major Arcanum of the Tarot
"The World"---
"Le Monde"

When he drew a circle on the face of the deep...
I was at work beside him,
And I was daily his delight,
Rejoicing before him always,
Rejoicing in his inhabited world,
And delighting in the sons of men.
(Proverbs viii, 27, 30, 31)

Lust – tiefer noch als Herzeleid!
Weh spricht: Vergeh!
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit –
Will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!

(Joy – deeper yet than woe is she!
Saith woe: Hence, go!
Yet Joy would have Eternity –
Profound, profound Eternity!)
(Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spake Zarathustra", trsl. A. Tille, revised M.M. Bozman, Everyman Library, 1958, p. 285)

One truly lives only when one dances.
(Isadora Duncan)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The above quotations are a musical prelude to the XXIIth Major Arcanum of the Tarot "The World". The Card represents a naked woman in a garland dancing and holding a wand in the left hand and a philter in the right hand. She is wearing a scarf thrown lightly across her shoulder. In the four corners of the Card one sees the Angel and the Eagle above, and the Bull and the Lion below. The four sacred animals thus enclose the garland in which the naked dancer, with her flowing scarf, is dancing.

Thus, the first ideas which come to mind in looking at the Card are those of dance, of flowering, and of the four elements – which in the first place turn the mind towards such problems as the essence of movement, of growth and of the spontaneous wisdom that we call "instinct". The first impression of the Card is therefore as if the last Major Arcanum of the Tarot would suggest a conception of the world as rhythmic movement or dance of the female psyche, sustained by means of the orchestral accompaniment of the four primordial instincts, which gives the appearance of a rainbow of colors and forms – or, in other words, that the world is a work of art. This idea is portrayed in a most impressive way by Edward CARPENTER in his work "The World as a Work of Art". This is tantamount to the thesis that the world is fundamentally neither a mechanism, nor an organism, nor even a social community – neither a school on a grand scale

nor a pedagogical institution for living beings – but rather a work of divine art: at one and the same time a choreographic, musical, poetic, dramatic work of painting, sculpture and architecture.

Is this truly the last Arcanum of the twenty-two Major Arcana of the Tarot? Does the series of twenty-two spiritual exercises – each destined to teach how to find and employ a key to the mystery of the world – truly end with a meditation and an understanding of the world as a work of art?

The Card suggests it, but in order to arrive at certainty there is no other way than that of profound meditation. This is the only way that certainty can be attained.

Let us therefore follow the general suggestion that the context of the Card conveys.

The idea of the world as a work of art is implicit in all cosmogonies which explain the origin of the world through a creative act, or through a series of creative acts, as is the case in Moses' Genesis. Creation – whatever its mode may be – entails the demiurgic rearranging of pre-existing matter from a chaotic state into a cosmic state, where the transformation from primordial chaos into cosmos is intelligible only by analogy with the magical art or the magic of art. "In the beginning God (ELOHIM) created (- magical act) the heavens and the earth (= work of art)" – so begins the account of the creation of the world in Moses' Genesis. Can one conceive of another idea here than that of the act transforming the ideal into the real, the intelligible (i.e. of the realm of intelligence) into the sense perceptible? And is this transformation into objective reality of that which exists only in divine thought and will analogous to the act of artistic creation as well as to the magical act? Is the divine magic implicit in Moses' account of the Creation of the World one and the same as the divine art that is implicit therein?

Platonic philosophy, also, conceives of the visible world as the realization of the invisible world of archetypes or ideas. Thus, the Neoplatonist PLOTINUS says that the idea "Man" is pre-existing and realizes itself in each particular man:

> "... when Man enters into human form there exists a particular man who, however, is still Man. From the one thing Man – man in the Idea – material man has come to constitute many individual men: the one identical thing is present in multiplicity, in multi-impression, so to speak, from the one seal." (PLOTINUS, Ennead VI, v, 6; trsl. S. MacKenna, "The Enneads", London, 1969, p. 536)

Here the metaphysics of magic and, at the same time, that of art are portrayed with admirable clarity! By means of the biological knowledge available in the first quarter of the XXth century, Edgar DACQUÉ, in "Leben als Symbol" ("Life as Symbol") reveals the nature of the "seal" spoken of by Plotinus (" the one identical thing is present in multiplicity, in multi-impression, from the one seal"). The following are two relevant quotations from "Leben als Symbol":

> " Schopenhaver once said that things appear to the child so bathed in splendor and of such a paradisical nature because they experience naively in each particular thing the idea of type (species). This splendor of inner reality is entirely lost for man who has attained to the maturity of rational thought, when he comes out of the "childlike state" of animated and living perception and is given over to laws of pure abstraction. Thus, each time we are in the state of experiencing the idea in form, we are – like the child – within Nature. Goethe was such a 'child'. " (page 114)
>
> "If, therefore , as I have tried to show all along, man is the archetype of the

evolutionary history of species and the center of living Nature... if the animal kingdom, as the ancients already knew, is man disintegrated — which we can now take in a realistic sense — then we have a solid basis for all totemism and animal cults that is well founded from the standpoint of natural science." (page 191) (Edgar Dacqué, "Leben als Symbol", Munich-Berlin, 1928, pp. 114, 191)

In other words, Edgar Dacqué — just like Pierre Teilhard de CHARDIN — sees the world with its animal, plant and mineral kingdoms as variations of a single theme — M a n, who is the archetype of Nature in evolution. Man is therefore the "seal" spoken of by Plotinus, and the beings of Nature are partial imprints of him. Is not the world in evolution, following Dacqué, a work of art in creation where the idea — Man — becomes reality?

With respect to GOETHE, whom Dacqué cites as an example of one who perceived the archetypal world in particular phenomena, he conceived of the creative, artistic act as an integral part of the creative activity which works in Nature, where this activity becomes continued in man. For him, a flower which pushes forth from the soil, and a poem which "pushes forth" from the soil of the soul of the poet, are only two particular manifestations of the same creative magical-artistic force. He called this force "metamorphosis". This is why Goethe, throughout his whole life, occupied himself both with observing metamorphosis at work and with scientific and artistic works on metamorphosis. His writings on color, "Zur Farbenlehre" ("Theory of Colors"), are nothing other than a description and analysis of the metamorphosis of light; his work "Metamorphose der Pflanzen" ("The Metamorphosis of Plants") is what its title says; his fragment "Metamorphose der Tiere" ("The Metamorphosis of Animals") is again what its title says, and his master work "Faust" is nothing other than the metamorphosis of the human soul since the epoch of the Renaissance.....

To summarize, it must be admitted that everyone who believes that the invisible becomes visible in the creation and evolution of the world also believes that the creative act, where the idea is transformed into the objective reality of art (and magic), is analogous to what takes place in the formation and transformation of the world. He cannot think otherwise if he is not a materialist, i.e. if he does not bring his thinking to a halt already in the vestibule of the edifice of the intelligible. For the materialist proceeds like the reader of a manuscript who, instead of reading and understanding the thought of the author, occupies himself with the letters and syllables. He believes that the letters wrote themselves and combined themselves into syllables, being moved by mutual attraction, which, in its turn, is the effect of the chemical or molecular qualities of the ink as "matter" common to all the letters, and of which the letters and syllables are epiphenomena. It is not the materialistic <u>method</u>, but rather materialistic <u>faith</u> which I have in mind here.

Concerning the relationship between art and magic, Joséphin PÉLADAN — himself an artist and magician — said:

"With respect to geniuses, they are intuitive people who bring to expression supernatural laws with images; they attract an influx from beyond and they are in direct relationship with the occult.

Neither Dante, nor Shakespeare, nor Goethe carried out evocations, and all three understood the Occult; they were wisely content to create eternal images; and in this they were incomparable Mages. To create in the abstract, to create in the souls of men, vivifying reflections of the mystery — this is the great work." (Joséphin Péladan,

"Introduction aux sciences occultes", Paris, 1911; cf. E. Bertholet, "La pensée et les secrets du Sar Joséphin Péladan", vol. ii, Paris, 1952, p. 377)

Thus, artistic creation differs from the operation of ceremonial magic in that the latter is more inward than the former. With respect to sacred magic, the relationship between sacred art and sacred magic amounts to that between the Beautiful and the Good, i.e. to the relationship between colors and warmth of the same light.

The Beautiful is the Good which makes itself loved; the Good is the Beautiful which heals and vivifies.

But the good from which the beautiful is lost from sight hardens into principles and laws — it becomes pure duty; the beautiful which is detached from the good and loses it from sight becomes softened to pure enjoyment — stripped of obligation and responsibility. The hardening of the good into a moral code and the softening of the beautiful to pure pleasure is the result of the separation of the Good and the Beautiful — be it morally, in religion, or in art. It is thus that a legalistic moralism and a pure aestheticism of little depth has come into existence. This has, at the same time, also engendered corresponding human types: on the one hand the "stiff-as-a-peg" human type, who was at his height during the reign of Puritanism in England — this form of life and religion without joy and without art — as also in the shape of "Huguenot ennui" in a large part of France and Switzerland, and on the other hand the human type of the bearded "artist", of shabby appearance with a mop of tufted hair, and with licentious morals, who is now (1966) all over the place.

The XXIInd Arcanum of the Tarot suggests the idea that the world is to be understood artistically rather than intellectually, since it is movement and rhythm (as the central figure is dancing). Does this Arcanum want to communicate this teaching only or does it, in the manner of the XXIst Arcanum "The Dolt", also give a warning? In other words, has it also two aspects — a teaching aspect and a warning aspect? For if the Arcanum whose Card represents an itinerant fool brought to us its more profound name, i.e. "Love", cannot the Arcanum whose Card represents a naked dancer in a garland bring us to its second, hidden name — "Folly"?

We shall see if this is so after having deepened our meditation on the Arcanum "The World" far enough to be able to be in a position to see clearly both the profound beauty of the world and the danger of the beauty of the world. May our meditation therefore be <u>sober</u>, and may it not let either the Arcanum's teaching or the warning that it entails escape us!

I say <u>sober</u> meditation, but since it is a matter of meditation on the world as a work of art, instead of conceiving of it as a system of laws, do we not — in advance — condemn ourselves to sterility by renouncing the élan of intoxication? Has not Baudelaire, an artist of genius, bequeathed us intoxication as the sole, indispensable key for artistic creation and artistic creativity?

By posing this question we are here plunged fully into the Arcanum "The World" with its two aspects. For just as there is human Art and art, so also there is cosmic, divine, creative Art and the cosmic art of mirages. And just as there are ecstasies and illuminations from the Holy Spirit, so there are intoxications from the spirit of mirage — which is named the "false Holy Spirit" in Christian Hermeticism. Here is a criterion for distinguishing them: if you seek for the

joy of artistic creation, spiritual illumination and mystical experience, you will inevitably more and more approach the sphere of the spirit of mirage and become more and more accessible to it; if you seek for truth through artistic creation, spiritual illumination and mystical experience, you will then approach the sphere of the Holy Spirit, and you will open yourself more and more to the Holy Spirit. The revelations of truth issuing from the Holy Spirit bring with them joy and consolation (consolatory spirit – the Paraclete), but are only followed by the joy which results from the revealed truth (spirit of truth – τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας – spiritus veritatis; cf. John xvi,13), while the revelations that we have called "mirages" follow the joy – they are born from the joy. (A mirage is not the same thing as a pure and simple illusion – a mirage being a "floating" reflection of a reality – but it is "floating", i.e. outside of the context of objective reality with its moral, causal, temporal and spatial dimensions.)

The sobriety that we propose to maintain in this meditation on the Arcanum "The World" is therefore in no way a program of dryness (although dryness is better than being swept away by the current of the pursuit of the enjoyment of "creative productivity" as such!), but rather consciousness of the necessity of applying the above-mentioned criterion to meditation on the Arcanum in question: the necessity of keeping away from the spirit of mirage by means of Faithfulness to the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience – these vows being the sole means of avoiding the dangers of the sphere of the spirit of mirage.

The joy which results from truth and the belief which results from joy – here is the key which opens the door to understanding the Arcanum of the world as a work of art. For it is this Arcanum which will reveal the world to us as a work of divine creative art, i.e. the world of Wisdom "who was at work beside Him... rejoicing before him always" (Proverbs viii,27-31), and it is this Arcanum again which will reveal the world to us as a work of art of deceptive mirage, i.e. the world of Maya, the great Illusion, who plays her game (Lila) unceasingly – or, in other words, the world which reveals God by manifesting him, and the world which hides him by covering him.

But whether it is a matter of a revelatory world or of a deceptive world, whether it is a matter of the world seen in the light of the sphere of the Spirit of Truth or of the sphere of the spirit of mirage, it is joy, a twofold joy, which plays the key role here.

What is this joy? What is it in its deeper sense?

Seen in the light of the Arcanum "The World" – the Arcanum of rhythmic movement or dance – joy is the harmony of rhythms, while suffering is their disharmony. The pleasure that one experiences in winter when one is seated close to a fire is only the restoration of an accord between the body's rhythm and the rhythm of the air – that which we call "temperature". The joy that friendship gives is the harmony between the psychic and mental rhythms of two or more people. The joy of good conscience is the accord between the moral rhythms of the lower self and the higher self. The beatitude promising those who have a pure heart that they will "see God" signifies the accordance of their basic rhythm with the divine rhythm. Joy is therefore the state of harmony of inner rhythm with outer rhythm, of rhythm below with that from above, and, lastly, of the rhythm of created being with divine rhythm.

Now, the whole world is the accordance of innumerable rhythms. For its life is based on

the preponderance of the accordance of particular rhythms, and not on their discordance. Thus life is basically joy.

It is therefore not without reason that the Septuagint – the Greek version of the Bible from the third century B.C. – renders the 24th verse of the IIIrd chapter of Genesis as follows: "And the Lord God sent him (Adam) forth out of the garden of delight to cultivate the ground out of which he was taken" (Καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν αὐτὸν Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς ἐργάζεσθαι τὴν γῆν ἐξ ἧς ἐλήφθη). This version is taken over by the Vulgate (23rd verse) – "Et emisit eum Dominus Deus de paradiso voluptatis, ut operaretur terram de qua sumptus est" (So the Lord God drove him out from that garden of delight, to cultivate the ground from which he came" – Liber Genesis iii, 23) – while the Hebrew Bible says only "Y H V H Elohim sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground (a d a m a h) from which he was taken (Genesis iii, 23). The translators of the Bible from the third century B.C., in translating the Hebraic term "g a n - e d e n" (גַּן־עֵדֶן) by "garden of delight", were thereby advancing the thesis that the primordial state of man and Nature was joy – that the world, in so far as it is a divine creation, is the kingdom of joy. It was only after the Fall that suffering became added to joy.

This traditional conception is well supported both by logic and experience. Indeed, can one imagine a world in perpetual movement – living and ensouled – deprived of all vital élan, all satisfaction, all joie de vivre ("joy of life")? Does not the very idea of movement – biological, psychic or intellectual, it does not matter – presuppose an affirmative impulse, a conscious or unconscious "yes", self-willed or instinctive, at the basis of all movement that is not purely mechanical? A lot is said in biology and psychology about the instinct of self-preservation, but what is this instinct if not the affirmation of existence – the manifestation of joie de vivre? If this were not so, universal weariness and disgust would have long ago put an end to all life.

Even the most austere asceticism bears witness in favor of this joie de vivre, for it wants to purify the mixture following the Fall: it aspires to the primordial and real joy of being. The ideal of Buddhism and Yoga – deliverance from terrestrial life – in the last analysis only affirms being, by commending the final surpassing of the world of forms to the degree of universality which is that of pure being. And the state of pure being – not of nothingness – is appraised in Yoga as beatitude or blessedness (ananda) by postulating the equation: S a t (being) = C h i t (consciousness) = Ananda (blessedness). With respect to the Buddhistic Nirvana, this is the state of complete absence of the suffering entailed by earthly incarnation. If Nirvana signified "void" pure and simple, and not the blessedness of pure being, no one – including the Buddha himself – would be able to find in himself the considerable energy demanded by the moral and intellectual effort on the way which leads to Nirvana: in order to make this effort, one has to want – and one cannot want the void, i.e. that where there is nothing to want. Complete suicide? No, since suicide is an act of despair, while Nirvana is the hope of the blissfulness of peace which one is able – or believes oneself to be able – to attain after having travelled a long path of discipline, renunciation and meditation. Do we not pray,

we Christians, also, for the souls of the departed: "requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine" ("grant them eternal rest, O Lord")? And "requiescant in pace" ("may they rest in peace")? Thus, Buddhists want nothing other than this "requies aeterna" ("eternal rest") that they call "Nirvana". There remains, lastly, the question of suicide. One says of some such person that he blew his brains out because he did not want to live any longer. Is it true that he did not want to live? Or, rather, did he commit suicide because he wanted to live <u>otherwise</u>? Because he did not believe that he could change his life?

At the root of the depression and despair which lead to suicide, the element of <u>dissatisfaction</u> is to be found, i.e. the desire and assertion for another form of life or another way of living. One is not dissatisfied if one does not want anything. One does not despair if one does not hope for anything. One does not kill oneself if one does not take life seriously. All dissatisfaction presupposes the affirmation of an imagined happiness. All despair presupposes a virtual hope.

Thus, all suicide presupposes the passionate affirmation of some value in life: love, glory, honor, health, happiness....

Even in the fallen world, in the world which preserves only reflections of its primordial state, which was that of unblemished joy — the state of the "garden planted by God" — even in our fallen world, of which Schopenhauer said that the sum total of suffering far exceeds that of joy, even in this world, I say, it is the joy of life which moves it. Even if Schopenhauer was right that the <u>quantity</u> of suffering here exceeds that of joy, the <u>quality</u> of joy, although it is rarer and although it may be less long-lasting than suffering, is of a nature to make its memory be cherished, to keep it in memory, to make it awaken hope, in a word, to make it move the world. "Joy is more profound than suffering; suffering says: depart. But all joy would have eternity — would have profound, profound eternity" —

(Die Lust ist tiefer als Herzeleid!
Weh spricht: Vergeh!
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit —
Will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit! ...) — says Nietzsche in his "Thus Spake Zarathustra". He is right: the sources of joy are deeper than those of suffering. They still spring from the river which flowed out of Eden "to water the garden". Joy is more ancient than suffering, and the world of joy preceded the world of suffering: Paradise was before the world of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. Just as life precedes death, so does joy precede suffering.

This is why king Solomon in the book of Proverbs speaks of joyous Wisdom — a theme which was taken up twenty-eight centuries later by Nietzsche, who advanced the thesis of joyous science (die fröhliche Wissenschaft) contrasted to the spirit of heaviness (Geist der Schwere), i.e., the gravity of the science of his day and our day. This joyous Wisdom says of herself:

> "Before his works of old I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established

the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limits, so that the waters might not trangress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was at work beside him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the sons of men". (Proverbs viii, 25-31)

This text portrays not only the artistic spirit which held sway at the dawn of the world, not only the joy of creation, but also the idea that joy is the accordance of rhythms. Indeed, Wisdom (S o p h i a, C h o k m a h) "was at work beside the Creator, and was daily his delight", which means to say that there was divine joy or accord between the rhythms of the Creator and of Wisdom "rejoicing before him always". And Wisdom "delighted in the sons of men", i.e. the human beings whose rhythm accorded with that of Wisdom "were her delight", just as she herself "was the delight" of the Creator by working in harmony with Him.

There is still room to note that part of the above-quoted text — namely "rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world" — is found represented on the card of the arcanum "The World" of a Tarot printed at Paris in 1500, the existence of which was pointed out by Oswald WIRTH (in "Le Tarot des imagiers du Moyen Âge", Paris, 1927). Here "The World" is represented by a globe, analogous to that held in the left hand of the Emperor (Arcanum IV); above this globe of the world an entirely naked woman is dancing, who is holding up a huge curtain in her right hand, the extremity of which she gathers together in her left hand. "This - says Oswald WIRTH - is Truth manifesting itself unreservedly, by drawing aside the veil of appearances in order to communicate the secret of the essence of things" (ibid, p. 221).

This variant of the Tarot evidently represents Wisdom "rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world".

Joy is the accordance of rhythms. Solomon speaks of the primordial joy which is the accordance of divine creative rhythms and the artistic creations of Wisdom. But he speaks also of another joy — that of accordance with the rhythm of folly:

"Folly is a noisy woman,
Wanton and without shame.
She sits at the door of her house,
She takes a seat on the high places of the town,
Calling to those who pass by,
Who are going straight on their way:
Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!
And to him who is without sense she says:
Stolen water is sweet,
And bread eaten in secret is pleasant!
But he does not know that those who go in there perish
And that her guests are in the depths of Sheol (the valley of the dead)" (Proverbs ix, 13-18)

The Septuagint adds to the last verse:

> "But hasten away, delay not in the place, neither fix thine eye upon her: for thus shalt thou go through strange water; but thou shouldst abstain from strange water (ἀπὸ δὲ ὕδατος ἀλλοτρίου ἀπόσχου), and drink not of a strange fountain, that thou mayest live long, and years of life may be added to thee".

There is therefore, the joy of Wisdom and the joy of intoxication — called "strange water" in the text of the Septuagint. The former springs from Wisdom, while the latter produces a false wisdom which consists of mirages. For a sphere of mirages exists in the invisible world, which constitutes the principal trap for esotericists, gnostics and mystics — for all those who are seeking authentic spiritual experience. Rudolf STEINER named it the "belt of lies" (Lügengürtel), and in traditional Christian Hermeticism it is called the "sphere of the false Holy Spirit". This sphere (or belt) is closer to that of ordinary consciousness — so-called "ego-consciousness" — than the "sphere of the Holy Spirit", where saints sojourn and from whence they act on human terrestrial consciousness. Thus in order to rise to the sphere of the Saints and the celestial hierarchies, one has first to "traverse", i.e. to refuse to react to its attraction, the "sphere of the false Holy Spirit". It is to the disciple "without sense" that the above-quoted text of the Septuagint is addressed: "delay not in the place, neither fix thine eye upon her: for thus shalt thou go through strange water; but thou shouldst abstain from strange water!" (Proverbs ix, 18 in "The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament"; trsl. L.C.L. Brenton, London, 1844, p. 653). Similarly, it is to the disciple "without sense" that the false Holy Spirit, the spirit of "folly", addresses herself by saying:

> "Stolen water is sweet,
> And bread eaten in secret is pleasant!"

The lure of the sphere of mirages, following the Book of Proverbs, is therefore "stolen water", i.e. the mobile element which flows and sweeps consciousness away in a delicious current of easily won illuminations and inspirations without consciousness having to make the moral effort which is summarized in the three words: cross, prayer and penitence. Here consciousness finds itself in a state of flight and freedom which dispenses with all law, with no responsibility of rendering account to anyone at all about anything at all — as if the Cross did not exist — receiving illuminations gratis, that it has not prayed for, free from all memory of sin, free of all remorse and all responsibility for sins and errors of the past, as if sin and error were trifles hardly worth remembering. Filled with joy, savoring the creative élan, consciousness gives itself unreservedly to visionary and inspired speculation, where every image and every thought which are presented to it appear to be revelations from above, imprints of seals of superhuman wisdom... This "stolen water" is all the more dangerous because it <u>inundates</u> the soul with floods of psychic energy, which is an entirely new experience — the door to the belief that it is a matter of supernatural interference. On the other hand, the illuminations that these floods convey tally with the most intimate inclinations and desires of the soul, which redouble their convincing force and their hold on it.

It is thus that false prophets and messiahs arise. It is thus also that there were those

illuminations in certain gnostic sects which resulted from immoral practices. For example, the following is the scene painted by Epiphanius – himself a witness of (and probably also a participant in) the gatherings of the Barbeliot sect – who recounts what he saw because he reckoned it impossible to keep silence:

> "They have their wives in common, and when someone comes to them who knows nothing of their teaching, the men have towards the women, and the women towards the men, a sign of recognition whereby they determine whether the newcomer belongs to their sect. The sign is given as they are shaking hands: as they touch, they make a kind of tickling on the surface of the palm of the hand. After they have recognized one another, they set about supper right away. They put on the table a sumptuous repast – eating meat and drinking wine even if they are poor. When they have dined together thus and, as it were, are "brimming at the veins" with energy, they then get down to business. Each man separates himself from his wife, saying to her: "Stand up and fulfill the love-feast (agape) with thy brother"... Nevertheless, I shall not shy away from saying what they are not shy of doing, so that – with due consideration for the reader – I shall arouse a shudder with each obscene act perpetrated by them. After they have had intercourse, not satisfied with the depravity of their fornication, they elevate their disgrace towards heaven. Each man and woman takes the man's ejaculation in their hands. Then, stepping forward and directing themselves towards heaven with this filth in their hands, they pray, as so-called "Stratiotics" and "Gnostics", offering to the Father of All what they have in their hands, with the words: "We bring to thee this offering, the body of Christ"... (etc., then follows a description of their communion)" (Hans Leisegang, "Die Gnosis", Leipzig, 1924, pp.190-191)

It was thus, also, that meetings of the Russian "Khlysty" sect ("flagellants") of the XIX th century sometimes finished, after the "descent of the Holy Spirit", through orgies of free love resulting from the freedom communicated by the "Holy Spirit".

It was also thanks to revelations from the sphere of mirages that, for example, many families of Estonian peasants in the XIX th century sold off their goods in order to go to a place on the elevated side of the Baltic sea, to Lasnamägi (Laksberg), so as to wait there for the arrival of a "white boat" – predicted by their prophetically inspired leaders – which was to have taken them to a land of freedom, where there would be neither barons nor taxes.

Lastly, it was thus that the medicine men of a number of tribes of Red Indians in North America, exasperated by the disappearance of herds of bison in the last quarter of the past century, had a revelation of a new magical cult – the "bison dance" – the practice of which would make the herds of bison reappear in the prairies, as it would also make the white man withdraw from the hereditary hunting terrain of the Red Indians... It was only after the bloody intervention of the United States army that the magical cult came to an end.

Intellectual hallucinations of still greater significance have, in our century, had their hold on entire peoples. It is not necessary to read Louis PAUWELS and Jacques BERGIER's book "The Dawn of Magic" (trsl. R. Myers, London, 1963) to understand that Hitler's Nazi adventure was due to a dynamism released through an intellectual hallucination of prodigious power – it suffices

to know the facts of contemporary history to which we have been witness.

Another example of the semi-magical hold of an intellectual hallucination over whole peoples in our times is given by Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism-Maoism. For the intellectual system and principles underlying this movement are as at variance with world reality as was the "myth of the twentieth century" of Nazi Germany. The Marxist intellectual mirage paints a scene of the world and human history where the spirit is only a kind of "exhalation" — in the guise of ideologies, religions and moral codes — issuing forth from material things and interests. The spirit is only an epiphenomenal superstructure upon biological and economic factors, produced and fashioned by them.

The success of Marxism-Leninism — apart from its appeal to feelings of resentment and indignation of the disinherited classes — is due to the putting to work of a prodigious quantity of psychic energy instilled into the masses of militants as a consequence of contact with the "sphere of the False Holy Spirit", inspired by some leading inspired prophets. It is the sphere of mirages which explains not only the semi-magical hold of Bolshevism on the masses but also its doctrines. This latter is the offspring of two different experiences: the experience of the sphere of mirages and that of economic material realities. The first experience engenders the Fundamental dogma of Marxism-Leninism that the spirit — with ideologies, religions and moral codes as its functions — is only a projection of human interests and ambitions expressing the will to power; which is true if the experience of spiritual life goes no further than the sphere of mirages, if it stops at this sphere, if it does not arrive at the sphere of the Holy Spirit, i.e. that of the saints and angelic hierarchies. Thus it has happened that the authors of Marxist-Leninist doctrine have discovered the reality of the sphere of mirages as an almost inexhaustible source of psychic energy on the one hand, and as an immense fabric of superstructure, on the other hand, where all earthly interest receives its ideological, religious and moral clothing. Now, purely earthly interests and aspirations amount to the will to power, which is the basis of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest in the general evolution of the species presented by Charles Darwin. On the other hand, power in the domain of human terrestrial life amounts to wealth, i.e. to control of production and enjoyment of the fruits of production; thus it amounts to control of the means of production. Now add to these conclusions drawn from experience of the sphere of mirages those drawn from experience of the earthly economic domain — with its inequality in the control of production and its inequality in the enjoyment of the fruits of production — and you arrive inevitably at the second fundamental dogma of Marxism-Leninism, namely that the means of production should belong to the whole community or society and not to individuals or groups of individuals. All other propositions of Marxist-Leninist doctrine — such as the social revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the classless society, the decline of the state, etc. — follow from these two fundamental dogmas, founded on the interweaving of experience of the sphere of mirages and experience of the economic domain seen as the field of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, the struggle between exploiters and the exploited.

With respect to the "myth of the twentieth century" of Nazi Germany, it also owed its hold on the masses as well as the dogmas of its doctrine to the influx of energy from, and to the illuminating effect of, the sphere of mirages. This time it was a matter not of the economic life, but rather of biological life — seen in the light emanated from the sphere of mirages. The factors of heredity and those of "blood" in Nazi doctrine took the place of the economic factors in Marxist-Leninist doctrine and differentiate it from the latter. The two doctrines have in common that it is the will to

power — of classes in the one, and of races in the other — which move and must move human history.

Now, the Nazi mirage dissipated suddenly as a consequence of the hard experience of the reality of complete military defeat. With respect to the Marxist-Leninist mirage, it is dissipating little by little as a consequence of the hard and sobering experience of economic reality and the reality of human nature. "Revisionism", after having rejected Stalinism, is at work, and will not allow itself to be halted any more.

The mirages dissipate, but at what a price.....

The sphere of mirages or the "sphere of the false Holy Spirit" is not only a thesis of the doctrine of Hermeticism, but is also the latter's trial and danger. Occultists, magicians, gnostics and mystics are its victims (or should I say — dupes?) no less often than nations or than the authors and leaders of social and political movements. We have already cited the case of the moral aberration of the Barbeliot gnostics in Egypt, and we mentioned that of the "Khlysty" sect in Russia, nearer to our time. These cases could be banished from your thoughts, dear Unknown Friend, as of little relevance, since they relate to ancient and more recent sects and not to esotericists of an independent spirit, having as their slogan "neither Loyola, nor Voltaire" (Papus). It is nevertheless a fact that one can observe here and there that independent spirits — concerned about their freedom, and rejecting all submission to an authority external to their own conscience — that these spirits end up by becoming sectarian esotericists, with their own revelations and their own personal illuminations. As they are lacking the fruits of a disciplined training, and as there is no one of authority to whom they can turn at the times of danger which spiritual experience holds in store for them, they easily fall prey to the lures of the sphere of mirages, against which Solomon cautions us in the above-quoted passage from the Book of Proverbs. What can one say? Mankind is a unity and one person's experience is meant to help and serve others. One cannot dispense with the experience of others, i.e. with authority, if one wants to avoid the traps set along the way of spiritual experience. Truth to tell, the principal reason as to why occultism is "occult" and esotericism is "esoteric", i.e. demanding protection through secrecy, is the concern to protect "free spirits" above all against the dangers of enslavement through "inflation", as Carl Gustav JUNG called it, which is an aspect of the sphere of mirages. On the other hand, the general reserve and refusal to accept occultism, esotericism, gnosis and mysticism — not to mention magic — that is manifested by the public opinion of all times, is due to the same reason. The sphere of mirages has in the past played too much of a role here, and has sown a profound mistrust in the conservative opinion of the public. The sober public does not want illusions — it has had enough of them.

Thus, it is the playing in of the sphere of mirages which is the historical cause of the veil of secrecy. By this means esotericism protects, on the one hand, audacious neophytes; just as, on the other hand, the exoteric public protects itself — through mistrust — against the danger of becoming engaged in the play of the sphere of mirages. For the way of esotericism — the way of personal and authentic spiritual experience — necessarily entails confronting the reality of the sphere of mirages or the "sphere of the false Holy Spirit".

This is why the mystics of eastern Christianity do not tire of warning beginners of the danger that they call "seductive illumination" ("prelestnoye prosveshtcheniye" — in Russian) and insist upon the nakedness of spiritual experience, i.e. on experience of the spiritual world stripped of all form, all color, all sound and all intellectuality. The intuition alone of divine love with its effect on moral consciousness is — they teach — the sole experience to which one should aspire.

LADYZHENDSKY – in his book "Vnoutrenny svet" ("The Inner Light"), published at St. Petersburg in 1915 or 1916 – gave a well-documented exposition of the doctrine of orthodox mystics concerning true and false illumination. There he reproaches the mystics of western Christianity for their doctrine (namely that of admitting, under certain conditions, visions and illuminations of an intellectual nature), i.e. for not rejecting visions and illuminations from the outset.

Thus, the mystics of eastern Christianity are so impressed by the reality and the danger of the sphere of mirages that they prefer to renounce all spiritual experience of a visionary or intellectual nature, whatever it may be, rather than risk the danger of confrontation with the reality of this sphere. With respect to the mystics of western Christianity, they are also conscious of the reality of this sphere and its dangers, but they do not reject outright all vision and intellectual illumination. Their experience accumulated under the supervision of the religious orders (there are no religious orders in the East) and that of the hierarchical and centralized Church (in the East there is no directing centre which is in a position to accumulate and validate the experience of hundreds – or even thousands – of years of the spiritual life of Christian mankind) allows them to derive criteria needed to distinguish whether or not private revelations stem from the sphere of the Holy Spirit, i.e. from the sphere of the saints and the celestial hierarchies. These criteria amount to the strict observation of the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, according to their letter and according to their spirit.

The chaste mind seeks the truth and not the joy of revelation of the truth, just as chaste love seeks union with the loved one and not the carnal pleasure of union. The chaste mind is therefore sober; it does not let itself be swept away by the "stolen water which is sweet", i.e. by the intoxication arising from the ready afflux – gratis – of floods of illuminations, concerning which Solomon warns us in the Book of Proverbs. The poor mind refuses to drink the "stolen water", since it seeks only what is essential to the life of the body, the life of the soul and the life of the spirit. It does not seek the superfluous – even if it is spiritual – and will not accept the invitation to take part in the orgy of spiritual illuminations that the sphere of mirages offers it. The obedient mind has an awake and cultivated sense of obedience, i.e. the <u>spiritual hearing of the will</u>, which renders it capable of recognizing the <u>voice</u> of truth and distinguishing it from other voices. It is to this spiritual hearing, developed by obedience, that the Gospel of St. John refers in the following passage:-

> "He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." (John x, 1-5)

True obedience is not at all the subjugation of the will to another will, but rather the moral clairaudience of the will – the faculty of knowing and recognizing the voice of truth. And it is this which renders the soul inaccessible to the lure of the sphere of mirages. Although no practicing esotericist is sheltered from the sphere of mirages, he who has made the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity an affair of the heart will come out victorious from the confrontation with this sphere. If St. ANTHONY said radically, "No salvation without temptation," one could add: "No temptation vanquished without the three vows."

Unfortunately, it is a fact that esotericists, in contrast to monks and nuns, tend as a general rule to make little of the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. They seem to have made their

fundamental attitude scientific, where one relies on intelligence alone. The result of this is often — very often — a game of intellectual fireworks which, in contrast to the sun, does not illumine, does not warm and does not vivify.

But, however, it is not sterility alone which is the principal danger of intellectual flight at the expense of moral and spiritual progress; it is, above all, the reality of the sphere of mirages. For the latter is always ready to supply not only visions but also intellectual illuminations and intellectual mirages. Thus it happens that the sphere of mirages enters into play and paints dazzling intellectual scenes for the mind that is forgetful of the necessity of the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. Dazzled the richness of the glimpses and the artistic breadth of the intellectual edifice which is presented to his eyes, such a mind accepts it, believing himself to have been favored by revelation from above.

What renders such an intellectual mirage all the more dangerous is that it is not, as a general rule, purely and simply a delusion or illusion. It is a mixture of truth and illusion, mixed in an inextricable way. The true serves to prop up the false and the false seems to lend the true a new splendor. It is therefore a <u>mirage</u> and not pure illusion, which would be easier to perceive. And as it is a matter of an alloy of the true and the false, the true appears here in the light of the false. Ideas which are true in themselves, as a consequence of their association with false ideas, acquire here a falsified meaning. It is a net woven from the true and the false which lays hold of the befuddled soul.

The sphere of mirages is also constantly at work to re-shuffle facts relating to former lives and karmic relationships. For example, it can evoke a series of subjective reminiscences or scenes from a distant past which, being a mixture of the true and the false, can completely disorientate the beneficiary — or rather the victim — of these revelations. For from this there result tasks and missions to accomplish in the present life which have only little — or even nothing — to do with the true tasks of this life. Mirages are above all frequent in the case of relationships between persons of the opposite sex who feel drawn to one another. It then often happens that the qualities, and even the identity, of one soul are projected upon another. Many a Tristan thinks he recognizes his Isolde in a simple maid, just as many an Elsa of Brabant sees her Lohengrin in a gallant.

The conclusion which asserts itself from all that we have said above concerning the sphere of mirages is that practical esotericism demands at least the same prudence as exact science, but the prudence that it demands is of a nature that is not only intellectual but also, and above all, moral. In fact, it encompasses the whole human being with his faculties of reasoning, imagination and will. It is therefore a matter of <u>being</u> prudent.

For this reason the rule of every serious esotericist should be <u>to be silent</u> — often for a length of years — concerning every new illumination or inspiration that he has, so as to give it the necessary time to <u>mature</u>, i.e. to acquire that certainty which results from its accordance with moral consciousness, moral logic, the totality of spiritual and ordinary personal experience — and that of friends and spiritual guides of the past and present — as also with divine Revelation, whose eternal dogmas are guiding constellations in the intellectual and moral heaven. And it will be only after having arrived at such an accordance that a personal illumination or inspiration can be considered communicable and presentable.

This applies not only to esotericists but also to artists. The latter — above all those who hold to the principle of "art for the sake of art" — are, as a general rule, playthings of the sphere of mirages. While keeping to the dogma of autonomy and independence of truth and morality

in the domain of art, they fall easy prey to the doings of the sphere of mirages to such a point that they even identify this sphere with the very source of their inspiration. For if one hardly concerns oneself with the "what" and seeks only the "how" of artistic creation, one will certainly end up by giving oneself up to illuminations and inspirations from the sphere of mirages — the sphere par excellence of so-called creative imagination, withdrawn from moral control.

This state of things was well understood by certain particularly artistic spirits. For example: Goethe, who wrote Faust over a period of sixty years, not only wanted to brush aside the sphere of mirages from his work but also to bring to the light of day in Faust the reality and mechanism of the action of this sphere. For him, art was not purely and simply a product of the play of the imagination, but rather a continuation in the subjective domain of the creative work which Nature carries out in the objective domain. He insisted on directed imagination — "exact imagination" (" exakte Phantasie") - for artistic creation as well as for knowledge.

But the principles of Goethe's method are brushed aside by classing them in the category of "literary classicism", i.e. by making them a question of literary taste instead of seeing and recognizing here an appeal to the conscience of the artist to stop drawing his inspirations from the sphere of mirages — at such a cost that the single work — Faust — could demand sixty years of work! Artists, like esotericists, are obliged to make their works pass the trial of time, so that the poisonous plants from the sphere of mirages can be uprooted, and there remains only the wheat, pure and ripe. —

Thus there exists sacred art, which is distinguished from profane art, just as sacred magic is to be distinguished from profane magic and sorcery.

> "Every sacred art is therefore founded on a science of forms, or in other words, on the symbolism inherent in forms. It must be borne in mind that a symbol is not merely a conventional sign. It manifests its archetype by virtue of a definite ontological law... a symbol <u>is</u> in a certain sense that to which it gives expression. For this very reason traditional symbolism is never without beauty: according to the spiritual view of the world, the beauty of an object is nothing but the transparency of its existential envelopes; an art worthy of the name is beautiful because it is true."
>
> — says Titus BURCKHARDT in the introduction to his work "Sacred Art in East and West" (trsl. Lord Northbourne, London, 1967, p.8)

Sacred art is therefore founded <u>upon a science of forms</u> and not upon subjective creative artistic élan or upon the subject as such.

> "When historians of art apply the term "sacred art" to any and every work that has a religious subject, they are forgetting that art is essentially form. An art cannot properly be called "sacred" solely on the grounds that its subjects originate in a spiritual truth; its formal language also must bear witness to a similar origin. Such is by no means the case with a religious art like that of the Renaissance or of the Baroque period, which is in no way distinct, so far as style is concerned, from the fundamentally profane art of that era; neither the subjects which it borrows, in a wholly exterior and as it were literary manner, from religion, nor the devotional feelings with which it is permeated in appropriate cases, nor even the nobility of soul which sometimes finds expression in it, suffice to confer on it a sacred character. No art merits that epithet unless its forms themselves reflect the spiritual vision characteristic of a particular religion" (p.7)

"The doctrine common to traditional civilizations prescribes that sacred art must imitate the Divine Art, but it must be clearly understood that this in no way implies that the complete Divine creation, the world such as we see it, should be copied, for such would be pure pretension; a literal "naturalism" is foreign to sacred art. What must be copied is the way in which the Divine Spirit works. Its laws must be transposed into the restricted domain in which man works as man, that is to say, into artisanship." (p.10) (Titus Burckhardt, "Sacred Art in East and West"; trsl. Lord Northbourne, London, 1967, pp.7,10)

It remains only to add to what Titus Burckhardt says that the transposition of the way in which the divine Spirit works in the domain of human artisanship presupposes the three traditional vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Purification must precede illumination and perfection. Sacred art, which imitates the way in which the divine Spirit works, requires that the soul of the artist rids itself of its own inclinations and habits, i.e. that it becomes poor, so as to be able to receive the wealth of the divine Spirit; that it reduces to silence its own fantasy and its own predilections, i.e. that it is chaste, so as not to disturb the limpid waters flowing from the divine source; and that it is obedient, so as to be able to imitate the divine Spirit at work, i.e. to be able to work in concert with the divine Spirit.

Now, the Card of the XXIInd Arcanum of the Tarot — "The World" — represents a Dancer holding a magic wand in her hand, and a philter in the other. The wand symbolizes the creative power of realization below of that which is above; she holds it vertically. This is the gesture of actualizing below that which is above — the gesture of sacred art, i.e. the gesture imitating the way in which the divine creative Spirit works.

And the following is what Paul MARTEAU says concerning the philtre that the Dancer is holding in her other hand:

"It is the creative philter of illusion on all the planes of Nature, for man can have both the illusion of love and that of spirituality. The philter is opposed to the wand in the sense that the illusion created by man can give him an ephemeral kingly dignity..." (Paul Marteau, "Le Tarot de Marseille", Paris, 1949, p. 90)

In other words, the Arcanum "The World" has a twofold meaning: it <u>teaches</u> that joy, i.e. the accordance of rhythms, is at the root of creation; and it <u>warns</u>, at the same time, of the danger of seeking for creative joy instead of for creative truth. Thus he who seeks first and foremost for creative joy will drink from the philter the intoxicating potion of illusion of the sphere of the "false Holy Spirit", i.e. the "sphere of mirages", while he who seeks first and foremost for creative truth will not only find it through the sober effort of vertical elevation but will also participate actively in the accordance of rhythms, i.e. creative joy. He will learn the way of the wand, i.e. to put himself vertically in contact with the "sphere of the Holy Spirit" — the sphere of the saints and the celestial hierarchies — by traversing the "sphere of mirages" unperturbed.

The Arcanum "The World" thus communicates to us a teaching of immense practical significance:

The world is a work of art. It is animated by creative joy. The wisdom that it reveals is a joyous Wisdom — that of creative artistic élan, and not that of a technical engineer or an

industrial designer. Happy is he who seeks wisdom in the first place, for he will find that wisdom is joyous! Unhappy is the one who seeks the joy of joyous wisdom in the first place, for he will fall prey to illusions! Seek first the creative wisdom of the world — and the joy of creativity will be given to you in addition.

From this teaching there results an important rule of spiritual "hygiene", namely: that he who aspires to authentic spiritual experiences never confounds the intensity of the experience undergone with the truth that is revealed — or is not revealed — through it, i.e. he does not regard the force of impact of an inner experience as a criterion of its authenticity and truth. For an illusion stemming from the "sphere of mirages" can bowl you over, while a true revelation from above can take place in the guise of a scarcely perceptible inner whispering. Far from imposing itself through force, authentic spiritual experience sometimes requires very awake and very concentrated attention so as not to let it pass by unnoticed. It is often difficult to even notice it, without speaking of being seized or bowled over by it. If this were not so, what good would exercises of concentration and profound meditation be? For all the exercises that all serious esotericism prescribes are necessary in order to render attention so awake and intense that it is in a position to perceive within the calm and silent domain of the depth of the soul where spiritual truth reveals itself. And this latter has the quite pronounced tendency to work gently and gradually, although — as in the case of St. Paul — there are exceptions. But as a general rule, the spiritual world does not at all resemble the surging of the sea — at work to break down the dams holding it back, so as to inundate the land. No, what characterizes the spiritual world, i.e. the "sphere of the Holy Spirit", is the consideration it has for the human condition. The amount and frequency of revelation from above, destined for a human being, is measured with a lot of care, so as to avoid every possible perturbation in the moral and physical equilibrium of this person. What the spiritual world prefers most of all is "reasonable inspiration", i.e. a gentle flow of inspiration which intensifies to the extent that the intellectual and moral forces of the recipient grow and mature. Here a succession of elements comprising a great truth are revealed little by little until the day when the great truth in its entirety shines within the human consciousness thus prepared. Then there will be joy, certainly, but not the perturbation of equilibrium which is intoxication — nor will there be nervous over-excitement or insomnia.

This is the law of the wand that the central personage of the Card of the XXIInd Arcanum is holding in one of her hands. But it is just the opposite which applies to the philter that she is holding in the other hand. There, first and foremost, it is a matter of the joy and intoxication which result from mirage-revelations. The way of working of the "sphere of the false Holy Spirit" is to make human souls convinced of the truth of intellectual or visionary mirages through the intensity of the impression that they produce. "That which excites the most is true" seems to be the criterion advanced by the sphere of mirages.

It is true that the most advanced school of modern depth psychology — advanced in the sense of penetration into the domain of the psychic unconscious — that of Carl Gustav Jung, considers the Numinosum in psychic experience as a manifestation of the dynamic reality of the Unconscious (or Subconscious, or even Superconscious). (By Numinosum is meant that which the soul experiences as something which is irresistibly imposed on it, or which is not mastered — or is even "unmasterable" — by it). The Numinosum is thus a psychic experience (in dream, fantasy-vision, or vision) which —

— through its irresistible fascination — subjugates he who experiences it. The numinosum does not present itself, it imposes itself. Consciousness submits to its action rather than calling it forth. The numinosum as such subjugates man independently of his will (cf. C. G. Jung, "Psychology and Religion"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, "The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, vol. 11, London, 1958, p. 7)

Now, according to JUNG, the reality of the Unconscious is manifested by action of a numinous character upon consciousness. This is what Jung says concerning the Unconscious: "...the unconscious... by definition and in fact, cannot be circumscribed. It must therefore be counted as something boundless: infinite or infinitesimal. Whether it may legitimately be called a microcosm depends simply and solely on whether certain portions of the world beyond individual experience can be shown to exist in the unconscious — certain constants which are not individually acquired but are a priori presences. The theory of instinct and the findings of biology in connection with the symbiotic relationship between plant and insect have long made us familiar with these things... A general proof of the rightness of this expectation lies in the ubiquitous occurrence of parallel mythologems, Bastian's "folk thoughts" or primordial ideas; and a special proof is the autochthonous reproduction of such ideas in the psyche of individuals where direct transmission is out of the question... Mythologems are the aforementioned "portions of the world" which belong to the structural elements of the psyche. They are constants whose expression is everywhere and at all times the same." (C. G. Jung, "Medicine and Psychotherapy" in "The Practice of Psychotherapy"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, "The Collected Works of C.G. Jung", vol. 16, London, 1954, pp. 91-92)

The Unconscious — with its numinous action — is therefore not confined to the individual soul; it surpasses it in every direction. Being "something boundless", the Unconscious is the world seen under its psychic aspect. Which means to say that it consists not only of innate, i.e. prenatal, individual tendencies and inclinations, but that it also includes what we have designated as "spheres" — namely the "sphere of the Holy Spirit" and that of the "false Holy Spirit". Action of a numinous character from the Unconscious, thus conceived, is certainly a criterion sufficient to distinguish the manifestation of the reality of the Unconscious from the manifestation of the subjectivity of the individual soul through the latter's spontaneous fantasy, feeling and intellectuality, but it does not at all suffice to distinguish the truth within this reality, i.e. to distinguish the action of the sphere of the Holy Spirit from that of the sphere of mirages. For the sphere of mirages, also, is real — but reality is one thing and truth is another thing. A mirage is certainly real, but it is not true; it is deceiving.

Jung was, at the same time, quite conscious not only of the compensatory — i.e. guiding and correcting — role of the Unconscious, but also of the gravity of the danger courted by human consciousness in submitting to the baleful, unrestrained influence of the Unconscious. For him this influence could be auspicious or baleful — which corresponds to the teaching of Hermeticism concerning these two spheres, i.e. that of the Holy Spirit and that of mirages.

Here is what he said concerning the danger which menaces mankind on account of the Unconscious:-

"Psychology constitutes nothing less than the most indispensable knowledge that we have. Indeed, it is apparent with an increasingly blinding clarity that that which

constitutes the greatest danger threatening man is not famine or earthquakes or microbes or cancer but man's well being. The cause of this is quite straightforward: there still does not exist any effective protection against psychic epidemics — and these epidemics are infinitely more devastating than the worst catastrophes of Nature! The supreme danger which menaces both the individual and the populace as a whole is <u>psychic danger</u>. With regard to this, our understanding proves to be quite powerless, which is explained by the fact that rational arguments act on the conscious — but on the conscious alone — without having the least effect on the unconscious. Consequently, a major danger for man emanates from the mass, i.e. the crowd, at whose core the working of the unconscious accumulates — first muzzling, then stifling the pleas for reason on the part of the conscious. Every organization of a crowd constitutes a latent danger, like that of piling up dynamite. Because it produces effects that no one wanted, and which no one is able to hold in check! For this reason one must ardently hope that psychology — knowledge of psychology and achievements in the domain of psychology — will spread on such a scale that human beings will finally understand the source of the supreme danger hanging over their heads. It is not by arming themselves to the teeth, every country of itself, that nations will be able, in the long run, to preserve themselves from the terrible catastrophes occasioned by modern war. Accumulated arms demand war! On the contrary, would it not be preferable in future to guard against and to avoid the conditions delineated at present — in which the unconscious breaks down the dams of the conscious and dispossesses the latter, making the world run the risk of inestimable devastation?" (C.G. Jung, "L'homme à la découverte de son âme"; French trsl. by R. Cahen, Geneva, 1944, pp. 402–403 — epilogue written for this French edition by Jung and dated Küsnacht-Zurich, January, 1944)

This is a warning from a man who speaks with real knowledge — with more knowledge, in fact, than many an authentic occultist — thanks to his prodigious experience accumulated during a long life directed by the will to heal. And it was this will to heal which made him first of all an explorer and then an expert in the world of depths, the door to which is the human soul.--

But let us return to the Arcanum "The World" — the Arcanum of movement, i.e. of the "how" of moving that which is moved by that which moves.

Until now we have been occupied with the central figure of the Card, i.e. with joyous Wisdom with her wand and philter, and with the way in which the wand moves consciousness as well as with the way in which the philter moves it. The movement emanating from the "sphere of the Holy Spirit" and that emanating from the "sphere of mirages" — the two movements corresponding to the wand and the philter — have this in common: that they move, as it were, from outside or above the human soul and the world of action. In order to understand the whole Arcanum of movement, i.e. the world, it is still necessary to consider the <u>movement immanent</u> in beings and things. This latter is represented in the Card by the garland which surrounds the central figure, and by the four figures — the three animals and the angel — in the four corners of the Card, outside of the garland.

The garland represents the movement immanent in <u>growth</u> and the four figures symbolize the

movement immanent in basic instinct, or what the ancients called the "four elements". For the four elements — "fire", "air", "water" and "earth" — are not chemical substances, or even states of matter (namely warmth, gaseous, liquid and solid), but rather modes of movement immanent in all substance... mental, psychic, organic and also inorganic. They are therefore the four fundamental instincts immanent in the world-in-movement; and this is why they are depicted in the tradition of religious iconography in general — as also in the Card of the Arcanum "The World" — as the cosmogonic quaternary of the Bull, the Eagle, the Lion and the Angel.

> "The Angel and the three sacred animals are represented in the firmament by stars of first magnitude located at the four cardinal points: Aldebaran, or the eye of the Bull; Regulus, the Heart of the Lion; Altair, the Light of the Eagle; and Fomalhaut in the southern Fish, which absorbs the water poured out by the Waterman. These stars mark the extremities of a cross whose center is the polar star which, because of its immobility in the middle of the celestial rotation, corresponds in the Arcanum ("The World") to the young girl framed in an oval of greenery depicting the zone of the ecliptic." (Oswald WIRTH, "Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge", Paris, 1927, p. 220)

The idea underlying this correspondence between the four "sacred animals" of the Evangelists and the stars of the signs of the zodiac is the zodiacal or cosmic significance of the four "cosmic instincts" or "elements". It attributes a universal and also a stable function to them in the planetary world of movement, just as the fixed stars are attributed with this function in the zodiac.

But it is not the constellations of the zodiac which manifest the principle of the quaternary of cosmic "elements" or cosmic "basic instincts". This principle is found manifested in the ineffable name of God — the Tetragrammaton: יהוה (YOD-HÉ-VAV-HÉ) — the imprint of which on a cosmic scale constitutes the quaternary in question. For what we know as the category (i.e. the structural disposition of our intelligence) of causality — with its quaternary of effective causes, formal causes, material causes and final causes — is only a special case of this imprint. Indeed, we would not know how to perceive order in the universal movement that we call "the world" if we did not apply causality, that is to say, if we did not distinguish what moves from what is moved, what forms from what is formed, the source from the aim, the beginning from the end. Without the application of causality to universal movement, we would be able only to contemplate it "open-mouthed", instead of being able to derive from it a "universal evolution", a "universal history", and a "law of gravitation" — and also to find the causes of illnesses, disasters, and all the dangers which lie in wait for us, so as to foresee them and avert them.

Now, that which manifests itself in the structure of our intelligence in the guise of the category of causality — which is revered by Cabbalists in the guise of the ineffable name of God, and which occupies the central place in Pythagorean philosophy in the guise of the sacred Tetrad — is what is manifested again in the guise of the quaternary of cosmic "instincts" (or the Sacred Animals of the Apocalypse and the Prophet Ezekiel), i.e. the quaternary of spontaneous impulsion, reaction, transformability and foldability (or enfoldment), or the four elements: Fire, Air, Water and Earth.

Impulsion, movement, formation and form — these four elements are at work everywhere.

They are to be found both in intellectual and in psychic and biological activity, both in so-called "inorganic" matter and in organic matter, both in the macrocosm and in the microcosm. An eminent Christian Hermeticist, Dr. Paul CARTON – now (regrettably) deceased – made a precious contribution to the living tradition of Christian Hermeticism with his masterly work on the four temperaments entitled "Diagnostic et Conduite des Tempéraments" ("Diagnosis and Behavior of the Temperaments"), where the four temperaments (Bilious, Nervous, Sanguine and Lymphatic) are not only described phenomenologically but also are explained as a manifestation of the universal law of the quaternary. We read there:-

> "Ancient Wisdom drew from the enigma of the Sphinx the four fundamental rules of human conduct: <u>to know</u> with the intelligence of the human brain; <u>to will</u> with the strength of the lion; <u>to dare</u> or to elevate oneself with the audacious power of the wings of the eagle; <u>to be silent</u> with the massive and concentrated force of the bull.
>
> Applied to the behavior of the temperaments, the allegory of the Sphinx teaches that man – in order to build himself wholly and to develop himself harmoniously – must normally cultivate, balance and hierarchize within himself the four essential functions of human life: the willful energy of the bilious, the reflective understanding of the nervous, the vital power of the sanguine, the self-control of the lymphatic."
> (Paul Carton, "Diagnostic et Conduite des Tempéraments", Paris, 1961, p. 20)

The four temperaments are, again, a special case of the universal quaternary of impulsion, movement, formation and form, of the four elements – Fire, Air, Water and Earth. And at the basis of these four elements the quaternary of the motive <u>instinct</u> immanent in the world is found. This instinct in turn reflects the four cosmic entities which bear the MERKABAH (the divine Chariot) – the Angel, the Eagle, the Lion and the Bull from Ezekiel's vision of the Chariot and from the vision of St. John. The latter describes them as follows:

> "The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle." (Revelation iv, 7) -- while Ezekiel stresses their fundamental unity by saying:
>
> "As for the likeness of the faces of the four living creatures, each had the face of a man in front; all four had the face of a lion on the right side; all four had the face of an ox on the left side; and all four had the face of an eagle at the back" (Ezekiel i, 10).

They are a unity because the divine name, the Tetragrammaton, is a unity (which, however, is made up of four elements) and because they represent this name, which is the divine Chariot.

Thus, the Zohar says concerning the four HAYOTH (living creatures) of Ezekiel's vision:

> "It is written concerning them, "And the likeness of their faces is as the <u>face of man</u>" (Ezekiel i, 10). They are all embraced in that likeness, and that likeness embraces them all... These likenesses are engraved on the throne – the

supernal chariot which is comprised in the four letters of the Tetragrammaton, which is the name that comprises all... and the throne is decorated with these likenesses, one to the right, one to the left, one in front, and one behind, corresponding to the four corners of the world..." (Bereshith 19a; trsl. H. Sperling and M. Simon, "The Zohar", vol. i, London-Bournemouth, 1949, pp.80-81)

The Zohar not only says that the four letters of the Divine Name (Tetragrammaton) correspond to the four corners of the world — the four cardinal points: East, West, North and South — but also speaks of Michael (whose likeness is as the face of man) directing himself towards the North with all the faces turned towards him (Bereshith 18b). In the further discourse it is said:

"The Ox (i.e. the living creature with the face of an ox) ascends to seek guidance and gaze in the face of man... the Eagle ascends to seek guidance and gaze in the face of man... the Lion ascends to seek guidance and gaze in the face of man..." Man" contemplates all of them, and all ascend and contemplate him." (Bereshith 19a, trsl. p.80)

The fourth living creature of Ezekiel's vision — the Angel (or the "man") — is thus the synthesis of all of them. Now, the Zohar describes how the Hebrew word SHINAN (Angel) embodies the mystery of the four living creatures:

"(On) the chariot of God are myriads of thousands of SHINAN (Angels)" (Psalm lxviii,15): the word SHINAN expresses by means of its initials all the faces, the SHIN standing for SHOR (ox), the NUN for NESHER (eagle), and the ALEPH for ARYEH (lion), and the final NUN representing by its shape man, who walks erect, and who mystically combines male and female." (Bereshith 18b; trsl., pp.79-80)

All these myriads of thousands of Angels -- continues the ZOHAR — issue from the archetypes symbolized by the name SHINAN, and from these types they diverge into groups (characterized by their respective faces). All the Angels with faces other than the face of man have two faces — firstly, that which is their particular one, and secondly, that which they have borrowed from the "man" by contemplation of the face of man (i.e. in beholding Michael): by reflecting the characteristic of strength (E L), for Angels with the face of the bull; by reflecting the characteristic of greatness (G a d d o l), for those with the face of the eagle; by reflecting the characteristic of power (G h i b o r), for those with the face of the lion. The "man" contemplates all the other faces, and they "all ascend and contemplate him". It is thus that they all receive the particular imprint of the "man", who is characterized by the name "tremendous" (N O R A). For this reason, the names by which the Holy One is called in the Scripture are (Nehemiah ix,32):-

"The strong, the great, the mighty and the tremendous"

These four names are engraved upon the chariot of God

"which is comprised in the four letters of the Tetragrammaton (Y H V H), which is the name that comprises all... These four supernal names bear along the throne, and the throne is comprised in them... It descends with its burden like a tree laden with branches on all sides and full of fruit. As soon as it descends, these

four likenesses come forth in their several shapes emitting bright flashes which scatter seed over the world." (Bereshith, trsl., pp 80-81)

This is the moving account from the Z o h a r — which emanates such fascinating and rejuvenating freshness — concerning the chariot of God and the four Spirits of the four elements whose symbols are found represented in the four corners of the Card of the Arcanum "The World".

The three-colored garland surrounding the central figure portrays the idea of the immanence of all passivity (blue color), all activity (red color) and all neutrality (yellow color) in the world-in-movement — the world of impulses emanating from the four Spirits of the four elements. These three colors signify the three essential modes of energy — passivity (latency), activity (deployment), and neutrality (harmony of equilibrium) — described in the Bhagavad-Gita and designated as the three qualities tamas, rajas and sattva, which are the modes of manifestation of the four elements.

Thus "S a t t v a action is that... which is performed in the Shastras, which is performed without attachment, desire or aversion, and without the desire for any fruit by the performer.

Raja action is that which is attended with great trouble and which is performed by one who desires for the fruit of action, and who is filled with egoism.

Tama action is that which is performed from delusion, without regard to consequences, and with one's own loss and injury as well as of others.

Sattva agent is he who is free from attachment and egoism, who is full of constancy and energy, and who is unmoved both in success and failure.

Raja agent is he who is full of affections, who desires for the fruit of actions, who is covetous, cruel and impure, and feels both joy (in success) and sorrow (in failure).

Tama agent is he who is void of application, who is without discernment, who is obstinate, deceitful, malicious, idle, desponding and procrastinating." (Bhagavad-Gita xviii, 23-28; trsl. M.N.Dutt, Bhishma Parva xlii, 23-28 in vol. vi, 1897 of "The Mahabharata", 18 vols., Calcutta, 1895-1905)

One can amplify indefinitely the manifestations of the three qualities (gunas) in all domains of existence. Thus the mineral kingdom is in the tamasic state, the animal kingdom is in the rajasic state, and the plant kingdom is in the sattvic state. The sage (brahmin) is in the sattvic state, the warrior (kshattriya) is in the rajasic state, and the servant (shudra) is in the tamasic state. The sun is sattvic, lightning is rajasic and the moon is tamasic, etc. It is always a matter of equilibrium (sattva), activity (rajas) and passivity (tamas), which are the modes of manifestation of the four elements.

Now, the three-colored garland is the Field of manifestation of the four elements acting at the heart of life's phenomena in the guise of vital élan, inherent in the current of life. It is "the river flowing out of Eden to water the garden, which divided and became four rivers" (Genesis ii, 10). The ancient Greeks named the river which divides itself into four branches the "ether", which is divided into four elements, i.e. Fire, Air, Water and Earth. Hindu doctrine names the fifth element, which is the root of the four elements, "a k a s h a", generally translated by "ether". And medieval alchemy sets great store on the quintessence ("quinta essentia", or "fifth essence") at the root and basis of the four elements. Thus, we read in "Hermetis Trismegisti Tractatus

vere Aureus. De Lapidis philosophici secreto, cum Scholiis Dominici Gnosti" (Leipzig, 1610) – "Divide lapidem tuum in quatuor elementa . . . et conjunge in unum et totum habebis magisterium." – "Divide your stone into four elements... and rejoin them as one, and you will have the whole magisterium."

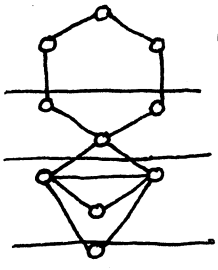
That is, the magisterium or "know-how" of the "great work" is the separation of the four elements from the "p r i m a m a t e r i a" ("primal substance") and then the realization of their unity in the "quinta essentia" (or "ether" of the ancients – cf. Aristotle, De coelo i,3).

This corresponds to the context of the Card of the Arcanum "The World", where there are four figures in the corners of the Card, with the Dancer at the center. The three-colored garland which surrounds her represents the intermediary stage of the analysis 1-3-4 or of the synthesis 4-3-1 (i.e. the progress of the four elements to the three "qualities" or "gunas", and of the three "qualities" to the unity of the "quintessence"). The three "qualities" correspond to the three "regimina" (regimens) of alchemy, through which the four elements are transformed and then synthesized in the quintessence. Thus, the first "regimen" transforms Earth into Water; the second "regimen" transforms Water into Air; and the third "regimen" transforms Air into Fire. (▽ into ▽, ▽ into △, and △ into △). The Arcanum "The World" is therefore that of Analysis and Synthesis. It teaches the art of <u>distinguishing</u>, within the totality of the experience of movement, the illusory from the real (the two hands of the Dancer with the philter and the wand), then the three "colors" ("gunas" or "regimina") of movement, and lastly the four "elements" or impulses inherent within all that is in motion. And it also teaches the art of "perceiving" (alchemically realizing) the basic unity of the four "elements", the three "colors", and the two "effects", i.e. the "quintessence".

Or, speaking Cabbalistically, the Arcanum in question is that of the <u>unfolding</u> of the sacred name of God and of its subsequent <u>refolding</u> – the two operations being analogous to the work of <u>creation</u> and that of <u>salvation</u>.

-/ (Whoever wishes to penetrate this thesis to the relevant details should consult Professor Friedrich WEINREB's masterly work "De Bijbel als Schepping" (in Dutch) ("The Bible as Creation") available in German and English translation (The Hague, 1963).) /-

It goes without saying that one could extend the analysis (followed by subsequent synthesis) of the Arcanum "The World" further – much further indeed. One could, for example, establish the role of the four elements in the four planes or "worlds" – namely, the world of Emanation, the world of Creation, the world of Formation, and the world of Action. (Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah) – according to the Sephiroth Tree: by taking the ten Sephiroth for each plane and by summarizing for each plane (by means of synthesis) the result obtained.



If we were to do this, what would we obtain?

We would obtain the system of the <u>minor Arcana</u> of the Tarot, i.e. the four times ten cards numbered 1 to 10 and the four times four figures synthesizing the teaching of the four

elements in relation to the four worlds. We would thus obtain the forty numerical cards, and the sixteen cards of figures, of the system of minor Arcana of the Tarot, i.e. ten numerical cards of Pentacles, ten numerical cards of Swords, ten numerical cards of Cups, and ten numerical cards of Wands, as well as the four cards of figures of pentacles, four cards of figures of swords, four cards of figures of cups, and four cards of figures of wands. With regard to the sixteen cards of figures, the correspondence between the four worlds and figures is: Knave — world of action; Knight — world of formation; Queen — world of creation; King — world of emanation. Concerning the four "suits" — Pentacles, Swords, Cups and Wands — they correspond exactly to the structure of the sacred Name Y H V H and, consequently, to the four elements. Wands represent the emanating principle, the Y O D of the divine Name; Cups represent the conceiving principle, the first Hé of the divine Name; Swords represent the formative principle, the Vav of the divine Name; and Pentacles symbolize the principle of form, the second Hé of the divine Name.

The fifty-six minor Arcana of the Tarot are, therefore, simply a development from the last Major Arcanum of the Tarot, "The World", developed rigorously — Cabbalistically and mathematically — where systematization is pushed so far that one asks oneself involuntarily if it is not a matter of a rationalistic performance, pure and simple. Indeed, it is difficult to accept, in the first instance, the minor Arcana of the Tarot as Arcana, in the sense of the Major Arcana that we have been meditating upon. For the rational arrangement so jumps out at one that one is tempted to reject it as "playing around" and therefore as something far inferior to the Major Arcana of the Tarot!

Nevertheless, there was a school (that of St. Petersburg in the first quarter of this century, mentioned in Letter XXI) where it was taught that the so-called "minor" Arcana of the Tarot are in reality Major Arcana in the sense that they signify a more elevated degree of knowledge and experience than that corresponding to the so-called "Major" Arcana of the Tarot. The Minor Arcana are to the Major Arcana as the upper school is to the lower school — such was the accepted thesis at the school in question.

Now, after more than 45 years of effort and study have elapsed, I must tell you, dear Unknown Friend, that the above thesis does not do justice to the Arcana of the Tarot — either to the Major or to the Minor Arcana of the Tarot. For the Major Arcana are reduced in this thesis to the role of a preparatory school for the Minor Arcana — which they are, thanks only to the use that the said school made of them. And the use that was made of the Major Arcana was that of a framework for an encyclopedic teaching concerning the Cabbala, Magic, Astrology, and Alchemy. As the Major Arcana lend themselves marvellously to the task of serving as a framework for such an encyclopedic teaching, they were therefore made use of for this purpose. Thus, the Major Arcana played the role of a general teaching program for the traditional occult sciences, aiming at giving general knowledge concerning their nature and methods, while the role of psychurgical practice was reserved for the Minor Arcana, i.e. the transformation of consciousness rising from plane to plane, which followed, as it were, as the upper school follows on from the lower school (the "lower school" being that of the Major Arcana). However, the Major Arcana are not, in their totality, a teaching program for the occult

sciences, but rather a school of meditation aiming at awakening consciousness to the laws and forces — to the Arcana — which are at work beneath the intellectual, moral and phenomenological surface. And the Minor Arcana constitute a systematized summary of experiences gained during meditation on the Major Arcana, in the guise of amplification — analysis and synthesis pushed to the extreme — on the Major Arcanum "The World". They are, if you like, a detailed elaboration of the Major Arcanum "The World" — or, again, its application in the domain of the various planes of consciousness, rising from the plane of action to the plane of emanation.

As it would ask too much of your forces, dear Unknown Friend, if I were to present you — in addition to the present twenty-two meditations on the Major Arcana of the Tarot — another fifty-six meditations on the Minor Arcana, and as, also, the time necessary for this task is lacking, I invite you, dear Unknown Friend, to do this work yourself, to write — in the manner of these Letter-Meditations — Letter-Meditations on the Minor Arcana of the Tarot.

It is so as to facilitate this task that I propose the following considerations, which can serve as a key to the Minor Arcana of the Tarot. These are:-

The Minor Arcana of the Tarot represent the way of ascent from consciousness belonging to the world of action (the phenomenal world) through the world of formation and the world of creation to the world of emanation. Thus, it is a matter of four degrees (including the summit) of ascent from the world of sensual and intellectual imagery, which corresponds to Pentacles, to the world (or degree) of destruction of this imagery — or the "wilderness" — which corresponds to Swords, so as to attain to that degree of spiritual poverty which is necessary to become a receptacle for revelation from above — which degree corresponds to Cups. The summit is obtained when the cup of consciousness which receives the revelation from above is transformed — by cooperating with revelatory action — into this latter. It then becomes revelatory activity itself, being actively united with the "world of emanation". Then the degree of Wands or Sceptres is attained, i.e. that of pure creative activity.

Therefore the way begins in the world of Coins or Pentacles. This is the world of the imagery of facts, intellectual constructions and imagined ideals. There, consciousness surrounds itself with a world of images — on the one hand the memories of experiences, and on the hand the formulas and schemes of the intellect, as well as those of moral imagination, which latter we call "ideals". This world of images is neither reality nor illusion. It consists of values-images corresponding to reality and which are therefore "convertible" into reality; for this reason "coins" are its symbol. For just as pieces of money are not themselves board, heating and lodging but can be converted into board, heating and lodging, so do memory images and the formulas and schemes of the intellect and moral imagination represent realities — beings "worths" that may be converted into reality.

Now, the world of Coins — the world of images — has a twofold significance. It signifies, on the one hand, the wealth acquired by consciousness, and on the other hand it signifies the totality of that which must be renounced if consciousness wants to come to spiritual reality. Because in order to convert money into real things, i.e. in order to buy them, one has to pay.

One has to become "poor in spirit" in order to have the kingdom of heaven.

Now, this payment, where one divests oneself of one's wealth of spirit, is that of Swords. There, the images-values (or Coins) that one has struck through intellectual, moral and artistic effort are destroyed, one after the other, in the same (Sephirothic) order in which they were formed. This can last an instant, an hour, or decades. With St. Thomas AQUINAS it took the time of a single ecstasy, while with Plato it seems that it was a slow process extending over several years. With respect to St. Thomas, it was probably at the end of 1273 that he underwent the decisive ecstasy. It lasted so long that his sister, with whom he was staying at the time, became concerned and thus questioned Brother Reginald (Raynald). "Qui dixit ei:

> "Frequenter Magister in spiritu rapitur cum aliqua contemplatur: sed nunquan tanto tempore, sicut nunc, vidi ipsum sic a sensibus alienum." Unde port aliquam horam ivit socius ad Magistram, et trahens ipsum per cappam fortiter, quasi a somno contemplationis ipsum ultimo excitavit. Qui suspirans dixit: "Raynalde fili, tibi in secreto revelo prohibens, ne in vita mea alicui audeas revelare. Venit finis scripturae meae, quia talia sunt mihi revelata, quod ea quae scripsi et docui modica mihi videntur, et ex hoc spero in Deo, quod sicut doctrinae meae sic cito finis erit et vitae."
>
> ("Who said to her:" The master is often caught up in spiritual rapture when he contemplates anything: but I have never before seen him taken out of his senses for so long." And so, after about an hour or so, the socius, i.e. Brother Reginald, went to the master, and tugging hard at his cloak, finally woke him out of his sleeping contemplation. He said with a sigh: "Reginald, my son, I reveal to you something in secret, forbidding you to reveal it to anyone as long as I live. I have come to the end of all my writing, because such things have been shown to me, such that all that I have written and taught now seems to me very insignificant, and this leads me to hope in God, that as I have come to the end of my teaching, so very soon will I come to the end of my life.") (William of Tocco, "Vita Sancti Thomae Aquinatis", ch.47; cf. P. Mandonnet, "La Canonisation de S. Thomas d'Aquin", Mélanges Thomistes" (1923), pp. 1-48, esp. p.8)

The ecstasy that St. Thomas underwent persuaded him that all that he had written and taught was of little significance (ea quae scripsi et docui modica mihi videntur). This is a case of passing through the sphere of Swords.

Concerning the other "rich man", PLATO (whose works, in eight volumes, are before me as I write these lines), he made the astonishing statement in his letter to the parents and friends of Dion (Plato's VIIth Letter, which the ancients designated with the name of the "great letter" – ἡ μεγάλη ἐπιστολή – written by Plato at about the age of seventy-five):

> "I have written no treatise on these matters (reality – τὸ ὄν), nor shall I ever write one. These matters cannot be expressed in words as other subjects

> can, but after persistent occupation in the study of these matters, after living for some time with them, suddenly a flash of understanding, as it were, is kindled by a spark that leaps across, and once it has come into being within the soul it proceeds to nourish itself." (Plato, Seventh Letter 341, c-d; cf. trsl. by R.S. Bluck in "Plato's Life and Thought", London, 1949, p. 174)

Thus Plato, at about the age of seventy-five, bears judgement on his philosophical work: "I have written no treatise on these matters..." (which he describes in this letter as "the matters with which I concern myself"). Either Plato is mocking (but irony of this kind is as far as possible from the general tone of the VIIth Letter), or he is serious and declaring himself to be a contemplative, i.e. that the enormous work that he did in the domain of argumentation with its four elements — words (or names, ὄνομα), definitions (λόγος), images (εἴδωλον), and science (ἐπιστήμη) — is not suited to the knowledge of Being (οὐσία, τὸ ὄν) that he calls simply "the matters with which I concern myself" (περὶ ὧν ἐγὼ σπουδάζω) and that his endeavor aspires towards mystical intuition of Being itself. And this endeavor occupied him so completely in his last years that it seemed to him that he could affirm that he had never written anything on "the matters with which I concern myself" (Seventh Letter 341 c).

This is another case of the passage through the sphere of Swords. Plato, as did St. Thomas Aquinas, arrived at the "spiritual poverty" which is necessary to become a "cup" and "scepter" (or "wand"), i.e. to become a receptacle for the revelation of Being, and then to become an active cooperator — which means to say i n i t i a t e d.

The "worlds" or "spheres" of Pentacles (Coins), Swords, Cups and Wands correspond to the degrees of the traditional way of p r e p a r a t i o n, p u r i f i c a t i o n (purgatio, κάθαρσις), i l l u m i n a t i o n (illuminatio, φωτισμός) and p e r f e c t i o n (perfectio, unio mystica, τὰ τέλη).

What one acquires through observation, study, reasoning and discipline constitutes the <u>degree of preparation</u>, or the world of Coins.

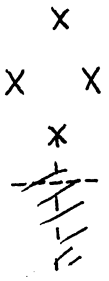
This "world" exposed to the action of the breath of the Real, constitutes the <u>degree of purification</u>, or the "world" of Swords.

That which remains after this trial becomes the virtue or faculty of the soul to receive illumination from above. This is the <u>degree of illumination</u>, or the "world" of Cups.

And, lastly, to the extent that the soul raises itself from receptivity to active

cooperation with the Divine, it is admitted to the degree of <u>perfection</u>, or to the "world" of Scepters or Wands.

These are the things which can serve as a key to the Minor Arcana of the Tarot, for your work, dear Unknown Friend, on these Arcana.

Adieu, dear Unknown Friend.

Festival of the Holy Trinity
21 May 1967.